

# Montana's

## early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers

birth - 36 months: what infants and toddlers need to know, experience and be able to do to reach their individual potential

### PHYSICAL



### EMOTIONAL



### SOCIAL



### COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE



### THINKING SKILLS AND COGNITION



## IMPORTANT NOTE

**WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT ISN'T:** *Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers Birth-36 Months* were created for people who live and work with Montana's youngest children. They are meant to assist in understanding children's growth and development. Keep in mind, however, that these are guidelines; expectations about what infants and toddlers should know and be able to do across different domains of learning. They are not an exhaustive list of skills developed in the first three years of life or a complete picture of growth and development during that time. They are a tool to support understanding of infants and toddlers, and a resource for ideas about ways to enhance their early learning experiences. The *Guidelines* offer information on infant and toddler growth and development. The Resource and Reference sections at the end of the document are provided for continued professional growth and development.

**IT'S USES:** Feel free to select information from the *Guidelines* as needed. For more detailed information about a particular domain of development, tab to that section. A particular *Guideline's* indicators and how it would look in the real world is provided with each indicator. For an overview of all areas of development, read the document from beginning to end! You'll find a useful poster which provides a snapshot of the *Guidelines* organized by domain for a quick review. The *Guidelines* have been designed as a practical resource for all who pick it up and can be used in a variety of circumstances.

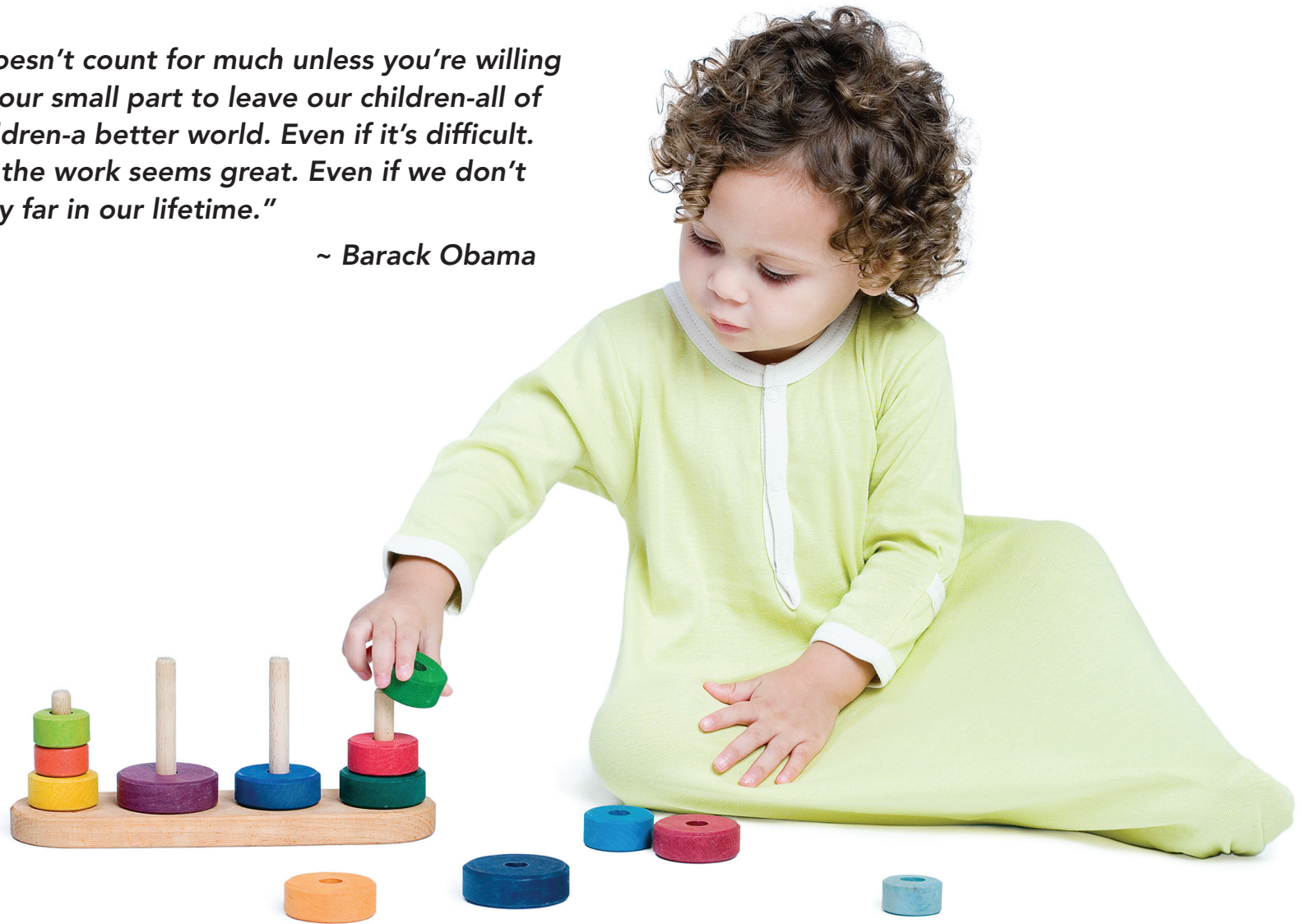
**IT'S SETTINGS AND PEOPLE:** It is recognized that Montana's infants and toddlers are cared for, nurtured, and educated in a variety of settings. These include their own homes; family, friend and neighbor homes; family and group child care homes; child care centers; and other early childhood settings. Throughout the *Guidelines*, the people that care for Montana's infants and toddlers will be referred to primarily as either "adult" or "adults."



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*"Life doesn't count for much unless you're willing to do your small part to leave our children-all of our children-a better world. Even if it's difficult. Even if the work seems great. Even if we don't get very far in our lifetime."*

*~ Barack Obama*



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## INTRODUCTION: A LETTER TO FAMILIES

Thank you for picking up *Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: Birth-36 Months*! This time in your child's life is an amazing journey in growth and development. Your child's body, mind, and spirit are changing each and every day in fascinating, and sometimes overwhelming, ways. It is our hope that these *Guidelines* can help you navigate this exciting time by giving you information to help you better understand the various developmental milestones that occur from Birth-36 months, and how you can support that development. They describe what your infant or toddler needs to know, experience, and be able to do to reach his or her individual potential and what adults can do to support that development. We know that family time is precious, and we hope these *Guidelines* will serve as an enjoyable reference for you.

During this critical period from birth through 36 months, your child is absorbing an incredible amount of information, even in the most ordinary moments of a typical day. While this time is filled with wonder for both you and your child, you may sometimes question whether you are doing enough to support his or her rapid development. The short answer to that question is "Yes!" The

simplest interactions carry great meaning for your child, most importantly the notion that he or she is loved and cared for. An infant or toddler who feels that his or her needs will be met, that they are worthy of the most basic attention from a caring adult, develops the confidence to engage with the world and learn. The *Guidelines* can support your understanding of your child, and expand the learning opportunities you are already providing. Please keep in mind that all children develop skills, knowledge, and abilities at their own pace. The *Guidelines* are not meant to be used as a developmental checklist, rather as a general guide to how infants and toddlers grow and develop. The *Guidelines* can also help you determine what to look for in a child care provider and to foster conversations about what your child is doing both at home and in the care of others.

As these are learning guidelines, you will not find techniques for dealing with specific behaviors. There are many excellent parenting books that can offer you behavior guidance strategies. Your local librarian, bookstore, or early child specialist can make recommendations, and you may read through a number of resources until you find the philosophy that makes the most sense for

you and your child. Every child is different and will respond differently to each approach. Remember that any support from friends, family, and other parents in the community can help you feel less overwhelmed, even if all you need is a break to return to your child refreshed.

Our goal is that these *Guidelines* offer positive support and bring further enjoyment to this unique period of growth and development in your child's life. We hope the *Guidelines* reinforce just how amazing your child is, and help you see what a great job you're doing! So hold your child, talk with your child, and include your child in your everyday routines. Know that the love and care you give your child sets the foundation for his or her success in learning and life!

We hope you feel that this document truly is yours; and as Montanans ourselves who care deeply about the care and education of our infants and toddlers, we thank you for taking the time to learn more about the growth and development of our precious children.

- *Montana's Early Learning Guidelines  
for Infants and Toddlers Team*





## INTRODUCTION: A LETTER TO INFANT AND TODDLER CAREGIVERS

*The Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: Birth-36 Months* are written as a resource to help you provide and plan for infants' and toddlers' growth and development. They tell you what infants and toddlers need to know, experience, and be able to do to reach their individual potential. As a caregiver and teacher of our very youngest citizens, you can use the *Guidelines* to:

- plan for learning experiences that support infants' and toddlers' growth and development
  - communicate with parents about their children's growth in a variety of areas and demonstrate your efforts to support their development
  - provide content for staff training and development
  - help organize advocacy efforts within the community, focusing on quality infant and toddler care and education as an important foundation for later learning
- appropriate expectations for infants' and toddlers' growth and development
  - development of learning activities and authentic assessment practices in young children
  - reflection and careful selection of tools for enhancing practice
  - the impact of diversity in culture, learning styles, abilities, and rates of development across all the domains
  - the joy and wonder of being with children

The *Guidelines* are meant to be used as a tool for early care and education practitioners to recognize and support all children at their developmental level. The *Guidelines* are not a diagnostic tool, an assessment tool, or a mandatory set of regulations.

The *Guidelines* have been developed to provide information about:



We hope the *Guidelines* enrich your interactions and experiences with young children and make each day a little easier by providing a planning tool and a way to recognize improvements you could make in your environment. We also see the *Guidelines* being useful for regularly tracking -- and sharing with families -- the growth and development of individual infants and toddlers in your care. However you choose to implement the *Guidelines* in your program, we hope they deepen your understanding of both the children in your care and the importance of your role in their precious lives.

- Montana's Early Learning Guidelines  
for Infants and Toddlers Team







# Purpose

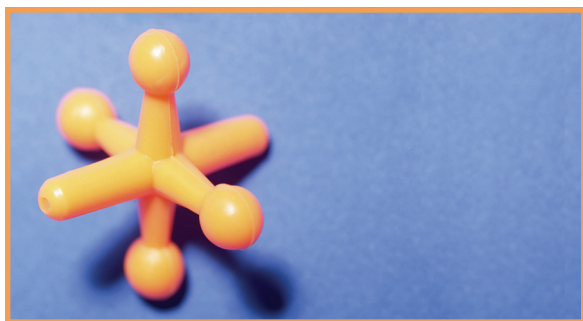


## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles were used to guide the development of *Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: Birth-36 Months*.

**Research and Best Practice:** Early childhood practice should reflect current research and be grounded in evidence-based practices. The *Guidelines* reflect the most recent available research about infant and toddler development. Where research is not available, information in the *Guidelines* is supported by evidence-based practice and professional wisdom.

**Fluidity of Development:** Infant and toddler development occurs across domains and age ranges. The dynamic interaction of all areas and stages of development was considered in each Guideline. Learning is multidimensional and children learn best through integrated, meaningful experiences.



### **Developmentally Appropriate Practice:**

The pace and sequence of development and learning varies from child to child. The *Guidelines* acknowledge that children begin life as capable and confident learners with unique strengths, interests, and approaches to learning. Caregivers have the responsibility to adjust their practice to support the growth and development of each individual infant and toddler.

**Play:** Children learn through play. Play is an important vehicle for developing physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively. The *Guidelines* emphasize the value of child-directed play and its central role in growth, learning, and finding delight in the world.

**Families and Culture:** Respect and appreciation for children's heritage and the diverse cultures they operate within are a valuable and important part of their development. The *Guidelines* reinforce healthy partnerships between families and other caregivers to ensure optimal support for infants and toddlers.

**Relationships:** Positive social relationships are the foundations for healthy growth and development. The *Guidelines* reflect the belief that infants and toddlers who develop strong attachments with primary caregivers are better able to learn, play and grow.

**Environment:** The environment is a crucial element in the learning and development of young children. The *Guidelines* promote engagement of infants' and toddlers' curiosity, supporting them in all aspects of development, and allowing them to construct their own understanding about the world around them through exploration and discovery.

**Inclusion:** Children are capable of learning, achieving, and making developmental progress regardless of their physical/emotional abilities, backgrounds, or experiences. The *Guidelines* recognize that infants and toddlers with special needs should receive the necessary supports, resources, and services to meet their individual needs and ensure optimal growth and development within any setting.

**Life-long Learning:** Learning is sequential, building upon prior understandings and experiences. The *Guidelines* were developed to align with the *Montana Early Learning Guidelines: Ages 3-5*. These two sets of early learning guidelines provide a foundation for school readiness and success in life. Learning begins before birth and continues for a lifetime.

*"When I approach a child, he inspires in me two sentiments: tenderness for what he is, and respect for what he may become."*  
~ Louis Pasteur

## ORGANIZATION OF THE DOCUMENT

*Montana's Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers: Birth-36 Months are organized into five Developmental Domains:*

**Physical (blue):** the ability of infants and toddlers to grow and use their bodies with increasing purpose, skill, and control.

**Emotional (green):** the emerging ability of infants and toddlers to become secure in their world and their emerging ability to recognize and manage emotions.

**Social (red):** the increasing understanding that infants and toddlers gain of themselves and others, and their emerging ability to relate to other people and the environment.

**Communication and Language (orange):** the emerging ability of infants and toddlers to communicate successfully with others to build relationships, share and express needs and feelings in multiple ways.

**Thinking Skills and Cognition (purple):** the building of concept knowledge and thinking skills.

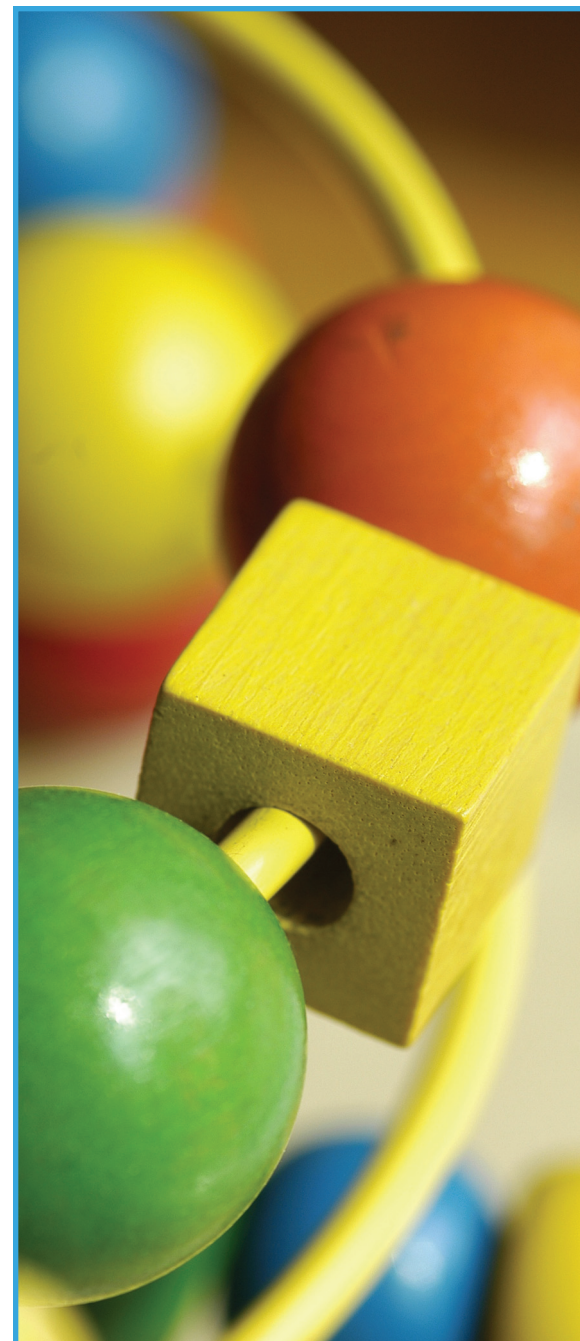
Although the information presented is organized by developmental domain, it is important to note that each domain is related to and influences the other domains in infants' and toddlers' growth and development. It is expected that readers note the overlap

of age ranges within each developmental domain. Growth and development occurs not as a series of isolated events throughout the first three years of life, but flows in a unique way for each child. Sometimes growth in one domain will necessitate a pause, or even regression, in another area. For the sake of providing a common understanding, development is grouped into age ranges; however, individual rates of growth should be considered for each child. If you suspect that a child is not meeting developmental milestones in a healthy fashion, please consult a specialist that can help determine if intervention is necessary. A list of referral agencies appears in the resources section.

**Each developmental domain is organized in the following manner:**

**Developmental Domain Introduction** – a definition of the domain, how relationships relate to the domain, the effects environments have on growth and development within the domain, and the connections the domain has with other domains of development.

**Guidelines for the Developmental Domain** – between three and five Guidelines are identified in each developmental domain and are numbered and titled.







**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to -** this section concentrates on behaviors that may be observed in a child related to each Guideline within three overlapping age groups: birth to 8 months; 6 to 18 months; and 16 to 36 months (the overlap reflects the impact of individual differences on the rate of development). This list is neither exclusive nor exhaustive; it is only meant to clarify the Guideline by providing examples of some observable traits in infants and toddlers.

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you -** this section gives examples of what you can do to support an infant's or toddler's growth and development within each age group. As with the previous section, this list is only meant to provide direction. There will be other ways you can work with infants and toddlers to foster their growth and development.

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces -** this section gives you a sampling of what one might see in an environment that supports the growth and development of infants and toddlers. Again, as with the previous two sections, this is only a brief look into what might be included in an environment.

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this guideline -** a short illustration of how each Guideline may appear in a real-life situation. It is hoped that the scenario will further deepen the reader's understanding of each Guideline and serve as inspiration for planning opportunities for children.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains -** this section provides a view of how one domain influences and is related to other domains. The overlapping connections take the reader to other domains of development to show how infants' and toddlers' learning takes place throughout the whole spectrum of growth and development.

**Activity -** a sample activity that demonstrates how an adult can support growth and development for that particular Guideline.

**Early Care and Education Terminology -** throughout the *Guidelines* there are terms in **bold** that may need more clarification in relation to the early care and education field. These can be found in the glossary.

## **MONTANA'S EARLY LEARNING GUIDELINES FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

### **SHOULD be used:**

- to help adults meet children's social and emotional needs and lay the foundation for future learning
- to help adults meet each child's developmental needs, including those of children with disabilities and developmental delays, at the level each child requires
- to improve quality in early care and education programs and to help adults build secure relationships with infants and toddlers
- to help adults learn more about child development
- to emphasize the importance of early care and education to the community
- to help child care providers and families recognize their own values and abilities
- to acknowledge the diverse value systems in which infants and toddlers grow and develop
- to increase the flow of information among families, early care and education practitioners, and policy makers
- to develop training and education programs for adults living and working with infants and toddlers

### **SHOULD NOT be used:**

- as a diagnostic tool to assess an infant's or toddler's growth and development
- to "push down" curriculum meant for older children to infants and toddlers
- to increase pressure on children and the adults who provide care and education for them
- to justify inappropriate assessment packages
- to move adults away from the power of relationships and play or increase emphasis on academics
- to suggest that outside care for infants and toddlers is more valuable than the home
- to evaluate early care and education programs or parenting skills
- to mandate specific curriculum, practices or rules and regulations for programs to follow

# Guidelines



# Physical Development

PHYSICAL





## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

### Guideline 1:

#### Sensory Learning (page 14)

Infants and toddlers use their senses to explore their environment through sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch.

### Guideline 2:

#### Health and Physical Well-being (page 17)

Infants and toddlers demonstrate healthy behaviors that contribute to life-long well-being.

### Guideline 3:

#### Large Muscle (Gross Motor) (page 20)

Infants and toddlers demonstrate large muscle strength, coordination, and skills to move and interact with the environment.

### Guideline 4:

#### Small Muscle (Fine Motor) (page 23)

Infants and toddlers demonstrate small muscle strength, coordination, and skills for intricate exploration and interaction with objects in the environment.



*"Our task regarding creativity, is to help children climb their own mountains, as high as possible."  
~ Loris Malaguzzi*

## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Physical Development is the emerging ability of infants and toddlers to use their bodies with increasing purpose, skill, and control, as well as the progression of their bodily growth and health. As infants and toddlers gain muscle strength and coordination, they use their bodies to connect with people and objects in their environment. This development follows a natural sequence. For example, most infants creep and crawl before they stand, walk, and run. Each new skill builds a child's physical ability to do things more independently. Through movement, infants and toddlers make discoveries about themselves and the environment and gain a sense of mastery.



**Relationships:** By providing an appropriate environment for physical exploration and modeling safe and healthy practices, adults give infants and toddlers a strong base from which to grow and learn. As infants develop emotional security based on their **primary relationships**, they become increasingly confident about using their emerging **motor abilities (small and large)** to explore the environment, try out new skills and learn about the world of people and things. Infants and toddlers depend on adults to make healthful choices for them. They also need adults to help them learn how to make good choices for themselves. Providers can model positive health and well-being activities, and should support families in their pursuit of the same. For example, by encouraging and accommodating a breast feeding mother through the first year, or by referring a family to a primary care physician, dentist, or specialist.

**Environment:** Children learn as they play and need to be able to move freely in their environment to develop to their full potential. They are filled with energy and should be encouraged to use their bodies to explore the world around them. Adults need to create a safe space for unstructured exploration of movement with appropriate levels of challenge. Because all children learn through moving, adaptation of the environment may be necessary to support the movement of a child, particularly one with a disability or other special need. All infants and toddlers benefit from adult support. It encourages them to take on new challenges and to strengthen

their developing sense of security and self-confidence. An adult is in the position to observe what a child's current abilities are and set him or her up for the next challenge that will, with time and effort, provide the child with a successful accomplishment. For example, a non-mobile infant who can support weight on his or her arms might be ready to start reaching for things when placed on his or her stomach. An adult can place interesting objects just out of reach and spend time laying on the floor with the infant to share in the exciting challenge.

**Connection with Other Domains:** Physical development affects infants' and toddlers' development in all of the other domains. For example, control of their arms and hands enables infants to communicate by gesturing and pointing. **Fine motor development** is necessary to participate in simple action songs like the Eensy-Weensy Spider and eventually handle and turn the pages of a book, grasp a marker to scribble or make marks. These are the first steps to later drawing and writing. In the area of cognitive development, **fine** and **large muscle development** allow very young children to explore the environment and choose activities. A child's ability to move plays a big role in his or her social interactions with other children.

## GUIDELINE 1: SENSORY LEARNING

Infants and toddlers use their senses to explore their environment through sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch.

As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:

### BIRTH - 8 MONTHS

- Turn towards a sound and look for its source
- Explore the environment through touch and taste
- React to familiar scents, e.g. becoming more calm when given a familiar blanket
- Follow an object with eyes

### 6 - 18 MONTHS

- Respond to sounds by looking to an adult for more information
- Seek out and explore new textures, shapes, and materials within the environment
- Eat solid foods and react to taste, scent and texture
- Move toward interesting sights in the environment

### 16 - 36 MONTHS

- Manipulate materials to explore sound, e.g. banging on a pan with a spoon to make noise
- Express preferences for particular tastes, textures and scents
- Build with blocks, complete simple puzzles, string beads (exhibit eye-hand coordination)
- Express wonder in the world through all five senses

You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:

- Respond to the infant's exploration and discovery with enthusiasm and encouragement
- Provide physical experiences that challenge the infant and encourage success, using all of the senses
- Describe the child's experiences and surroundings during daily activities and routines
- Encourage a variety of **sensory experiences** by providing safe materials that the infant can grasp, chew and manipulate
- Imagine yourself in the infant's place, taking time to try to understand how he or she sees and experiences the world

- Provide opportunities to extend his or her experimentation with sensory experiences, e.g. handing the child a second rock when he or she has picked one up to play with
- Provide physical experiences that are attainable, yet challenging, for the child that promote movement and use of all the senses
- Understand that "getting messy" is part of the child's learning experience
- Describe the child's experiences and surroundings with descriptive language, addressing all of the senses involved

- Allow the toddler to explore his or her surroundings, giving ample time to observe where the discovery can lead
- Demonstrate nurturing and caring through interactive games
- Talk with the toddler about his or her daily activities and routines, accepting and responding to their input and thoughts
- Ask open-ended questions when introducing new materials and experiences, discovering together how those ideas fit with reality

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment and spaces:**

- A variety of safe materials that involve all the senses, e.g. natural materials, items of different sizes, items that make different sounds, and objects with different textures
- Safe, natural spaces for the child to explore
- Items that have **surprise elements**, magical properties and provide a **sense of wonder**, e.g. a jack-in-the-box toy
- A variety of healthy foods available at regular times throughout the day, with new foods being introduced numerous times, and the permission to "get messy" to understand the food with all senses

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**USING TOUCH TO EXPLORE**

Three-year-old Dakota and 16-month-old Sierra are off to the lake with Mom and Grandpa! When they arrive at the lake, the children explore the rocks on the shore and begin to throw them into the water. As Grandpa prepares the fishing poles, Dakota turns over a rock to find an interesting bug. "Mom! Look what I found!" he shouts. Carrying Sierra, Mom walks over to see his discovery. Dakota holds the centipede in her face and says, "What is this thing?" Mom places Sierra on the ground, so she can play in the sand. As Mom and Dakota examine the centipede, Sierra squeals with delight as the sand squishes through her fingers and toes. Mom responds by saying, "The sand is warm today," Sierra giggles as she enjoys the warm sand on her skin. The family continues to enjoy the lakeshore.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**EMOTIONAL:**

Recognize and express feelings

**SOCIAL:**

Show interest and move toward the activity of another child

**COGNITIVE:**

Ask simple questions making connections

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Ask others to label unfamiliar objects

*"I think, at a child's birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift would be curiosity."  
~ Eleanor Roosevelt*



## ACTIVITY: WIND CHIMES & WINDSOCKS

**The experience of watching a windsock or hearing a wind chime ignites an infant's or toddler's sense of sight and hearing.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Wind chime, bell, banner, windsock, or streamer
- A place to hang the item, inside or outside, where a fan or natural breeze will cause it to move

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Show the child the hanging object to explore more closely together.
2. Blow on or gently push the wind chime to make it move or chime.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Talk with the child and describe what you are seeing, hearing, and touching.
- Help the infant or toddler to touch and feel the wind chimes and windsocks if it is safe to do so.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Offer **open-ended questions** to expand children's observations, using phrases like:  
"What do you see?"  
"What's happening?"

- Introduce specific concepts such as color, sound, texture, and size.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Hang the chimes or streamers high enough that children cannot reach them on their own. However, consider bringing the child close enough to feel the materials and experiment with cause and effect through gentle pushing and pulling.
- Periodically check to make sure they are attached safely and securely.
- Move them from place to place every so often to keep the children interested in them.



## **GUIDELINE 2: HEALTH & PHYSICAL WELL-BEING**

**Infants and toddlers demonstrate healthy behaviors that contribute to life-long well-being.**

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Startle or cry at sudden loud noises
- Respond to regular daily routines such as diaper changing and feeding
- Eat to fullness
- Initiate active play, exploring and interacting with the environment
- Show a preference for familiar people

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Demonstrate increased ability to self-soothe and fall asleep
- Accept and eat a variety of family foods
- Attempt new activities that require physical movement
- Take an interest in meeting physical needs, such as eating, dressing, bathing, and diaper changing
- Respond to suggestions and re-direction for unsafe behaviors and situations

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Participate in healthy routines, such as using tissues to wipe nose, wash and dry hands and brush teeth
- Participate in regular family meals, e.g. helping to set the table, select foods, and serve self
- Participate actively in simple movement games, dance, outdoor play, and other forms of exercise
- Get enough sleep each day to maintain good health
- Display some recognition of rules and pay attention to safety instructions

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Respond positively and promptly to the infant's messages and cues
- Ensure the infant receives regular medical care, including all age-appropriate immunizations
- Practice safe sleep procedures, placing infant on back to sleep
- Respect the importance of daily routines and find ways to engage the infant during those times, e.g. tickling toes during a diaper change

- Model basic personal care routines
- Practice safe sleep procedures, placing infant on back to sleep and providing railings for toddlers
- Model nutritious eating habits and establish regular meal and snack times
- Provide opportunities for movement and physical challenge, both indoors and outdoors
- Describe the steps involved in the regular daily routines as they happen

- Respond positively to the toddler's attempts to communicate needs
- Provide opportunities for the toddler to participate in own care routines, encourage efforts in dressing, toileting, hand washing, brushing teeth and bathing
- Allow toddlers to participate in meal planning and preparation to their ability
- Introduce and repeat simple songs and games that encourage movement and participation

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Physical space for the child explore without risks to health and safety
- Separate diapering/toileting and food preparation areas that contain child-sized equipment if possible, e.g. low toilets, small eating and serving utensils, small pitchers for pouring
- Sleeping area with a crib or railed bed, a firm mattress, light or thin blankets, and without toys, bumper pads, pillows, or other soft items
- Materials that allow for and encourage self-help skills and a growing interest in foods

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**FORMING HEALTHY EATING HABITS**

In the morning as parents drop children off, Rebecca visits with the family about what they did over the weekend. Later in the day, the cook is busy in the kitchen; the hot dish is coming out of the oven and the smell of tasty food is in the air. Rebecca helps children move from circle time to hand washing in pairs or groups as the children take turns at the sink and find their places at the tables. The children show their anticipation as they are hungry and ready to eat. The tables are set and the serving bowls of food have arrived. There is an adult seated at each table with the children. The children pass the serving dishes of food around; choosing among the food available with each child helping themselves. "Please", "thank you" or "no, thank you" are heard throughout the meal. The children eat as much as they want, and they can have more, if it is available. Each child gets enough. Rebecca asks the children at their table, "Did anyone do something fun this weekend?" Children are eager to share their stories. As the children share their stories, Rebecca highlights their experiences by saying, "Jerod and his dad made breakfast together." "Emily

helped her mom rake the yard." "Jacob went to church with his family." "Mia and her grandma went shopping." As the children finish, each child carries their dishes to the tubs provided, scraping food off their plates into the garbage and then placing plates, cups and utensils in the labeled tubs. The children seem full and ready for a story before rest time.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**SOCIAL:**

Demonstrate enthusiasm in the company of other children

**EMOTIONAL:**

Recognize own needs and take steps to fulfill them

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Respond to action words by performing the action

**COGNITIVE:**

Complete simple projects or tasks

*"All of life is education and everybody is a teacher  
and everybody is forever a pupil."  
~ Abraham Maslow*



## ACTIVITY: FINGER PLAYS

**Finger plays can enhance connections between an adult and an infant or toddler as they engage in routine experiences, such as diapering and dressing, together. They also provide a relaxing transition to play. The predictable manner in which these tasks are carried out builds trust between the adult and infant or toddler.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A good repertoire of songs and finger plays, e.g. "Pat-a-Cake", "Eensy-Weensy Spider"

### WHAT TO DO:

1. At appropriate times - anticipating transitions, during dressing, or when babies engage you in play, sing a song.
2. Involve them in a rhyme related to a current happening, something that has been talked about recently, or just choose one for fun.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Pause at different points during finger plays to allow children to respond and react to its familiar story or rhythm.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Introduce art and books to expand toddlers' learning, such as finding information and pictures about spiders after singing Eensy-Weensy Spider.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Infants and toddlers learn to anticipate what is coming next if the adult uses words like, "One more time and then we'll change your diaper."
- Ask families to share their favorite or traditional rhymes and games.
- Be consistent and predictable in meeting infants' and toddlers' needs.
- Be available and slow down to play.



### **GUIDELINE 3: LARGE MUSCLE (GROSS MOTOR)**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate large muscle strength and coordination, and skills to move and interact with the environment.

<b>As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:</b>	<b>BIRTH - 8 MONTHS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrate bodily reflexes, e.g. startle reflex</li><li>• Hold head up when placed on tummy, eventually supporting self on arms</li><li>• Reach for and grasp toys, objects or people</li><li>• Uses arms and legs to move forward or backward when on tummy</li><li>• Sit steadily without assistance</li></ul>	<b>6 - 18 MONTHS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roll from front to back</li><li>• Raise self to sitting position, eventually reaching for a toy on the floor</li><li>• Crawl</li><li>• Take steps leading to walking unassisted</li><li>• Throw, roll, push or pull toys</li></ul>	<b>16 - 36 MONTHS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Squat to pick up an object</li><li>• Walk and eventually run</li><li>• Carry objects while walking</li><li>• Climb and walk up and down stairs, one step at a time</li><li>• Throw at a target</li></ul>
<b>You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide opportunities for the infant to move freely, including <b>tummy time</b></li><li>• Provide a safe environment and a variety of objects for the infant to explore</li><li>• Introduce the infant to a variety of different body positions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide opportunities for the child to move freely, including tummy time for infants, and crawling and walking for toddlers</li><li>• Provide a variety of objects to be touched, explored, pulled, and pushed</li><li>• Introduce physical activities that promote balance</li><li>• Allow space and objects that a toddler can throw and play with safely</li><li>• Get outside at least once a day</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide opportunities for the toddler to move freely, to practice walking, running, and climbing</li><li>• Provide a variety of objects to be pulled, pushed, and jumped onto, over, and off of</li><li>• Introduce a variety of surfaces for the toddler to explore, both indoors and out, which will challenge his or her balance</li></ul>

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Mobiles above the crib (removing after they are capable of pulling themselves up), musical toys, and colorful pictures at the child's eye level
- Equipment and opportunities that encourage reaching, grasping, kicking, crawling, walking, and running
- Riding toys, climbing equipment, steps, balls, push/pull toys, and blocks to encourage use, practice and mastery of large motor skills and muscle use
- Uncluttered space to move that encourages the safe flow of people

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**INTERACTING WITH  
GROSS MOTOR MOVEMENT**

Sadie and her dad are taking a break in the shade on a blanket in the park. Sadie is three-months-old and dad has placed Sadie on her tummy and lies in front of her. As Sadie uses her arm muscles to push her body up on her hands, dad says, "Sadie, you are getting so strong!" Sadie responds by smiling and cooing. After several minutes of doing her push-ups, Sadie's muscles begin to tire, she drops down to her tummy and starts to fuss. Dad says, "Oh Sadie, it looks like you are getting tired, should we roll you over to your back?" Dad helps roll Sadie to her back and Sadie becomes visually fascinated by the sunshine filtering through the treetops as the leaves blow in the breeze. Sadie kicks her little legs as her arms move while her dad talks to her about the leaves and the big, blue sky. As Sadie loses interest, dad picks a leaf out of the grass nearby and moves it from side to side in front of Sadie. He says, "You are watching that green leaf, aren't you Sadie?" She moves her head back and forth as her dad watches her eyes follow the leaf. He gently touches Sadie's cheek with the leaf and she responds by turning toward it.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**SOCIAL:**

Turn away when overstimulated by others

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Experiment with making different sounds

**COGNITIVE:**

Turn head and follow with eyes when a new person or visual cue enters his or her visual field

**EMOTIONAL:**

Turn toward the sight, smell, or sound of a primary caregiver

*"Kids: they dance before they learn  
there is anything that isn't music."  
~ William Stafford*

## ACTIVITY: PILLOW MOUNTAIN

**Infants who are efficient crawlers will enjoy this extra challenge, and toddlers will create themes to go with the movements. Imagine a soft mound to crawl over, with interesting dips and ridges.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A variety of covered foam, cushions, and/or pillows in various shapes
- Large sheet or bedspread (optional)

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Create a small hill to crawl over, with interesting dips and ridges. Be sure there is a soft landing for infants who may roll off.
2. Respond to the infants and toddlers making eye contact with you, squealing, or making other vocalizations and gestures. Reflect their experiences back to them.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Use a simple half-cylinder pillow to create a challenge for beginning crawlers.
- Build a small mountain out of pillows, making sure that it is stable and safe.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Try to build the pillow mountain together. Base the steepness and height of the mountain on your observation of the toddlers who will use it. Use a sheet or bedspread to help keep its shape. Let the children discover, add to, and freely explore the mountain.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- By observation, an adult can tell which infants and toddlers would enjoy this experience and how to keep each child safe. Try this outdoors.





## GUIDELINE 4: SMALL MUSCLE (FINE MOTOR)

Infants and toddlers demonstrate small muscle strength, coordination, and skills for exploration and interaction with objects in the environment.

As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:

### BIRTH - 8 MONTHS

- Grasp fingers placed in hand
- Visually follow a moving object
- Discover hands and fingers
- Reach for toys, objects and people with both hands
- Explore toys and other objects with hands and mouth

### 6 - 18 MONTHS

- Transfer toys from hand to hand and hold an object in each hand
- Dump and fill containers with objects
- Use thumb and forefinger to pick up foods or small objects
- Let go of a toy to watch it fall, over and over again
- Make marks on paper with a crayon or marker

### 16 - 36 MONTHS

- Use a spoon to eat
- Turn pages of a book, two or three pages at a time
- Scribble with a crayon or marker and use a paintbrush
- Stack items on top of one another and/or line objects up side by side
- Pour liquid from a small pitcher into another container

You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:

- Provide opportunities for the infant to reach for, grasp and hold a variety of objects
- Play hand and finger games with the infant, such as "The Eensy-Weensy Spider" or "Pat-a-Cake"
- Engage the infant in activities that promote moving fingers individually, like nesting cups and stacking rings

- Provide opportunities for pouring, mixing, scooping, patting, and filling
- Provide opportunities to scribble using crayons, markers, and chalk
- Provide opportunities and materials that allow for practice of fine motor and eye-hand coordination such as blocks and shape sorters

- Model use of writing, drawing and small intricate work in everyday life
- Provide time, equipment and encouragement for the toddler to develop self-help skills such as undressing, feeding, zipping, snapping, buttoning, and hand-washing
- Provide opportunities and materials that allow for practice of fine motor and hand-eye coordination such as stringing beads and lacing cards
- Provide materials such as play dough or modeling clay for rolling, pounding, and shape making

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Objects that encourage the use, practice and mastery of small motor control and muscle use, e.g. rattles, blocks, nesting cups, pegboards, snap-together toys
- Areas that encourage touching and exploring textures, temperatures, hardness, softness, etc.
- Items and areas that invite the child to create artistically with **open-ended materials**
- "Finger food" that the child can pick up and eat by him or herself, as well as small eating utensils he or she can grasp and use to begin to learn to feed self

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**COORDINATING SMALL MUSCLE SKILLS**

Tiffany and Ron operate a group child care facility out of their home where they care for children ages 1-5 years. They have just finished circle time where they read *The Snowy Day* by Ezra Jack Keats. It is time to go outside. Ron takes the children to the window to see the weather outside and read the big thermometer. The children exclaim, "It's snowing!" Ron points to the thermometer and says, "Wow, it is 20 degrees today! What do you think we need to wear outdoors?" The children shout out, "Mittens, hats, coats, boots!" The children begin to gather their outdoor clothing from the hooks and tubs in the entry way. Ron begins singing the outdoor dressing song, "Snow pants, boots, coats, hats, and mittens . . . hats and mittens" to the tune of "Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes." While the older children help themselves, the younger ones look to Ron for assistance. Tiffany comes in from the kitchen and observes that 2 ½-year-old Zane is ready, but needs his coat zipped. Tiffany says, "Time to zip up!" Zane struggles with the zipper. Tiffany asks Zane if she could help him get it started. He replies, "Sure!" After Tiffany starts his zipper, he pulls it up the rest of the way. Lindsey, age 3, is dressed and goes to help 18-month-old Jane pull the sleeve of her jacket over her arm brace and Jane uses sign language to say, "Thank you." As the children are bundled up, they head outside with Ron for a fun-filled playtime in the snow.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**EMOTIONAL:**

Persist in a task for longer periods of time before becoming frustrated

**SOCIAL:**

Respond to an action done regularly in routine

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Use words or sign language to convey events that are happening in the present

**COGNITIVE:**

Notice and describe how items are the same or different

*"Learning and development are interrelated from the child's very first day of life."  
~ Lev Vygotsky*

## ACTIVITY: COLORED WATER

**Infants' and toddlers' natural love of water motivates them to play and learn. Colored water adds interest and helps to make the results of their actions more visible.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Plastic eye droppers
- Ice cube trays
- Water
- Food Coloring
- Shallow bin
- Paper

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Make colored ice cubes.
2. Allow the infant or toddlers to explore by touching and mouthing.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Introduce new elements to complement the experience of the colored ice cubes, such as a shallow bin of water that infants and toddlers can use to push the ice cubes around and experiment with sinking, floating, and movement in water.

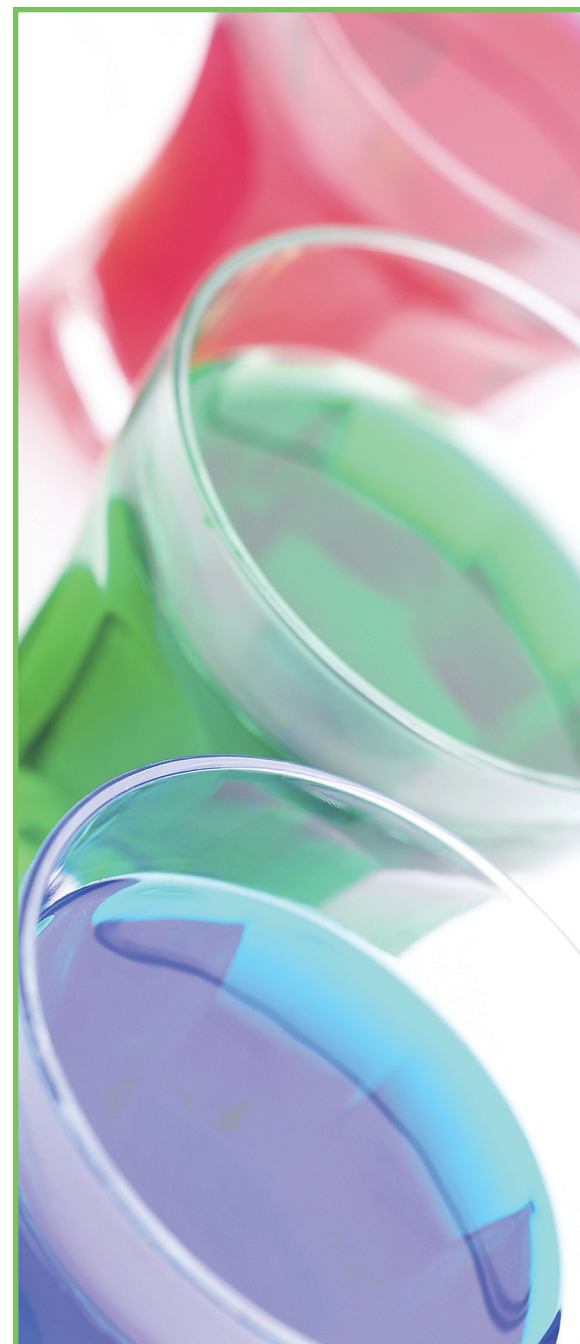
- Bring out large sheets of paper for the infants and toddlers to paint, using the colored ice cubes.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Introduce plastic eye droppers to deepen the small muscle experience. Provide one eye dropper and one ice cube tray per child. Pour colored water in several sections of the ice cube tray. Invite the children to squeeze their eyedroppers in the water. Ask them, "What happens when you squeeze the end? What do you see?"
- When they are ready for a new challenge, invite the children to move the water from one section to another using the eyedropper. It makes more sense when you have your own tray and eyedropper to model.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Appreciate the child's efforts as they learn to control getting the water into and out of the eyedropper.
- You may want to put a tarp on the floor or take the activity outside in warm weather and allow the infant or toddler to be dressed solely in a diaper, as this is a messy activity. Food coloring can stain.
- You will also want to supervise closely if an infant puts the ice cube in their mouth to avoid choking.







## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### **Guideline 1: Attachment Relationships (page 28)**

Infants and toddlers show trust, a sense of security, and an emotional bond in relationships with familiar adults who consistently meet their needs.

### **Guideline 2: Temperament (page 31)**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate unique personality traits which are identifiable and consistent across time.

### **Guideline 3: Sense of Self (page 34)**

Infants and toddlers show an awareness and appreciation of self as a unique and capable individual.

### **Guideline 4: Self Regulation (page 37)**

Infants and toddlers manage internal states, feelings, and behavior; and develop the ability to adapt to diverse situations and environments.

### **Guideline 5: Expression of Emotion (page 40)**

Infants and toddlers express a range of feelings through facial expressions, gestures, and sounds.



*"When she looks into your eyes, reaches out to you, softens and molds into you when you cuddle her, she makes you fall hopelessly in love and ready to nurture her."  
~ T. Berry Brazelton*



## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Emotional development is the emerging ability of infants and toddlers to become secure in their world. It refers to the way children learn about themselves and how they develop self-awareness, self-control, and self-expression. Infants and toddlers are emotional beings. As they interact with others, they come to understand and appreciate the uniqueness of their emotional experience. Eventually they gain some control over their sometimes strong emotions.

**Relationships:** The quality of the relationship between an adult and an infant or toddler is one of the most important components of a child's development. Sensitive adults who read the child's cues and meet emotional, physical and basic needs help the child become securely attached to them. **Attachment** refers to the relationship that develops between an infant or toddler and a parent or primary caregiver. Secure attachment relationships have a positive effect on every aspect of early development, from emotional **self-regulation** to healthy brain development. The quality of this relationship depends on how the infant or toddler is responded to when requesting attention for basic needs to be met that include comfort, care, and security. Adults can support healthy attachment in their relationships with infants and toddlers through meaningful interactions such as looking into their eyes, smiling and talking; physical closeness; interacting during daily

routines (feeding, diapering, etc.); playing together; generally paying close attention to their wants and needs; and working to understand who they are as individuals.

**Environment:** Infants' and toddlers' overall well-being is dependent on a nurturing and supportive environment with consistent adults. Parents and other adults who care for infants and toddlers on a regular basis make a lasting impression on their feelings about "Who am I?" A child who develops strong bonds with loving adults is more likely to answer that question in a positive way. When encouraged to do so, young children express themselves creatively through language, art, music, and dramatic play. Adults play a significant role in supporting children's **self-expression** or restricting it. It is important for adults to understand that when children seem to be "just scribbling or messing with paint," "fooling around with musical instruments and

singing," or "dressing up and being silly," they are actually engaged in creative self-expression.

**Connection with Other Domains:** Infants' and toddlers' evolving sense of security and well-being have a profound effect on all areas of development. For example, an emotionally secure infant will more readily explore and learn than an insecurely attached infant. In a secure relationship, the child engages in meaningful back-and-forth interaction. The "dance" between the adult and child fosters increasingly advanced communication and language development. Emotions drive early learning. For instance, the pleasure an infant experiences when making a discovery or mastering a motor skill inspires the child to continue to learn and to develop new skills. Emotional experiences affect the child's personal health, well-being and school readiness.





## **GUIDELINE 1: ATTACHMENT RELATIONSHIPS**

Infants and toddlers show trust, a sense of security, and an emotional bond in relationships with familiar adults who consistently meet their needs.

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Turn toward the sight, smell or sound of a familiar adult
- Show preference for and seek comfort from a familiar adult
- Smile and reach to be picked up by a familiar adult
- Look intently at familiar human faces
- Exhibit separation anxiety, for example cry at the departure of a familiar adult

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Exhibit separation anxiety, e.g. cry at the departure of a familiar adult
- Look for the familiar when tired, hungry, upset or in a new situation
- Seek comfort from a favorite object, e.g. blanket, stuffed animal, pacifier
- Reconnect with familiar person by making eye or physical contact from time to time as they play
- Display stranger anxiety when an unfamiliar person gets too close, or when left with an unfamiliar person

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Use gestures, glances or words to stay connected to familiar adult
- Uses stall techniques to keep familiar adult around a bit longer
- Feel comfortable playing away from familiar adult for a period of time
- Use imitation or pretend play to make sense of relationships and his or her world
- Understand that a familiar adult will return after departure

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Hold, cuddle, hug, smile at, laugh with, or otherwise interact with the infant
- Consistently and promptly respond to the infant's need for comfort and reassurance, react to the infant's cues and movements, and provide assistance when needed
- Provide a limited number of consistent adults that relate to and interact with the infant on a regular basis
- Reinforce healthy partnerships between the infant's family and other adults

- Talk with and sing to the child frequently, particularly during feeding and diaper changes
- Listen carefully and with interest to what the child says
- Explain to the child what is likely to happen when you need to leave, always making sure that he or she knows you are leaving, and being clear when you will return again

- Read and look at books with the toddler
- Set appropriate and consistent limits, acknowledging appropriate behavior
- Support the toddler during daily transitions, paying attention to his or her feelings

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Soft and comfortable places to spend one-on-one time with familiar adults
- A place for quiet interaction that allows time and attention to be focused on the child on a regular basis
- Items or pictures that provide a connection to the child's family members and other special people in his or her life, and to the home environment if being cared for outside the home
- A responsive and interactive line of written and verbal communication between an outside caregiver and a child's family

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**SECURE RELATIONSHIPS**

John has been in center-based child care with Julia as his primary caregiver since he was three weeks old. Now, John at the age of 18-months arrives at child care to begin his day. John extends his arms to Julia as soon as he sees her across the room. While he was still securely in Julia's arms and after saying hello, he looks back at Mom, to make sure she is still there. Mom does her usual good-bye routine, saying, "I am going to work now," and gives John two kisses and a hug. "See you right after your nap time and afternoon snack," Mom tells John. Julia, still holding John, whispers in his ear, "Wave bye-bye to Mama." John waves good-bye. Mom waves back, turns and walks out the door. John begins to cry and wiggling to get out of Julia's arms, reaching towards the door and sniffing, "Mama, Mama," with a trembling lower lip. Julia states, "I can see that you are sad to see your Mom go to work," Julie observes. "Let's get your blanket and go to the good-bye window," she suggests. After John waves good-bye and blows Mom one more kiss, Julia redirects his attention, asking if he would like to get his family book to look at or play at the play dough table. "Book," he states his choice matter-of-factly. John scrambles down from Julia's arms and flips through the "Family Book" box. Finding his, he pulls it out and happily settles at the table, showing his friends a photo of his mom.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**COMMUNICATION/LANGUAGE:**

Purposefully interact with books

**PHYSICAL:**

Turn pages of a book, two or three pages at a time

**COGNITIVE:**

Display recognition and excitement about a previously enjoyed game or toy

**SOCIAL:**

Respond to requests made by familiar adults

*"You will always be your  
child's favorite toy."  
~ Vicki Lansky*

## ACTIVITY: INFANT MASSAGE

**One way of connecting with infants or toddlers during playtime or during routines is to use simple massage techniques on infants' hands or feet.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- No materials are needed for this experience

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Start by taking a deep breath and relaxing yourself. Then hold the infant's hand gently with your thumbs, moving them up the center of the infant's palm and out along the base of the fingers.
2. Go slowly and note the infant's reaction; continue as long as the infant seems to be enjoying the activity.
3. Do both hands and then try massaging the feet.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Introduce singing or music to the activity.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Name the parts of the hands and feet as you are doing the massage.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Some infants might prefer to have their feet massaged. Foot massage follows the same pattern. Using the thumbs, press gently up the center of the infant's sole and out the base of the toes.
- This intimate contact must respect the infant. If the child is uncomfortable or squirming away, it's time to stop.
- If you are caring for another person's child, be sure to communicate with the family that massage is part of your program's routine. Maintain an open discussion regarding each family's perspective on touch.



## **GUIDELINE 2: TEMPERAMENT**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate unique personality traits that are identifiable and consistent across time (temperament).

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Exhibit a biological rhythm and way of using senses
- Express comfort and discomfort in different ways
- React to new situations and experiences in a consistent manner
- Begin to regulate his or her eating and sleeping patterns
- Have a predictable mood when awake

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- React predictably to familiar adults
- React to changes in routines, people, and surroundings
- Approach playtime activities with consistent interest patterns
- Express several clearly differentiated emotions
- Use crying in more communicative ways rather than just for discomfort and physical needs

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Have a standard method of approaching new situations and unfamiliar adults
- Assert control over situations to get his or her needs met
- Recognize and express feelings
- Persist in a task for longer periods of time before becoming frustrated
- Exhibit contrasting emotional states; mood shifts occur less frequently

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Provide warm, loving, supportive, predictable, consistent and continuous care
- Recognize that infants differ in temperament, preferences, culture, development and interaction styles and consider these when interacting
- Provide ample time for play, and allow the infant access to a variety of materials and experiences

- Provide stimulating and satisfying social and emotional interactions individually or in small groups
- Create a schedule that includes ample time for play, and allows the child to choose activities based on their own interests
- Use observation of the child to support learning experiences in ways that accommodate the child's unique characteristics and development

- Accept the toddler for who he or she is, and develop a daily routine which accommodates temperament, e.g. allowing ample time for transition if that is difficult
- Guide toddlers in their efforts to include others in play, modeling how to approach others with differing temperaments, sometimes directly explaining why others may behave the way they do
- Be patient with his or her method of dealing with both internal and external conflict

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support infant and toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Variety and flexibility in the toys and activities being offered that allow a child's individual needs to be met and interests to be addressed
- Areas that encourage active and quiet play, hard and soft areas, group and personal spaces
- Routines allowing for choices and personal rhythms and preferences

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**PERSONAL RHYTHMS**

It is a warm spring morning and Miss Jessica lets Samantha, 24-months-old, know that in five minutes it will be time to go outside. And again, "Samantha, in two minutes we are going outside." Samantha continues to play with a doll, even after the rest of the children have headed outdoors. Jessica gets Samantha's sweater from her hook and goes over to sit beside her in the housekeeping area. "Samantha, it's time to go outside. Would you like to put your sweater on or carry it outside?" Samantha decides she would like to carry her sweater outside, grabbing it and stating, "Mine!" Jessica hands it to her and they go outside holding hands. Miss Jessica looks around and says, "I see a few of your friends are playing in the sandbox. Let's join them." Samantha skips over to the sandbox with Jessica following. They climb over the side and sit in the sandbox. Miss Jessica picks up the shovel and scoops sand into a bucket, then offers the shovel to Samantha. Samantha takes the shovel and begins scooping and dumping sand. "Who needs a load of sand on their work site?" Jessica asks the other children that are in the sandbox. Pete, 28-months-old, looks up and states that he needs some for his "foundation." "Well, Samantha has one just right for the house you are building," Jessica says.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Follow simple verbal and non-verbal directions

**PHYSICAL:**

Carry objects while walking

**COGNITIVE:**

Choose one activity over another and pursue it for a brief period of time

**SOCIAL:**

Display a sense of ownership

*"Relationships are like dances in which people try to find whatever happens to be the mutual rhythm in their lives."  
~ Fred Rogers*



## ACTIVITY: ONE THING AT A TIME

**When you are with an infant or toddler for even a short time, offer the child the opportunity to focus on a play object. This is also an opportunity for the adult to observe the child's individual approach and specific interests.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A single object or toy
- Consider choosing toys that engage specific senses, such as a chime bell, a mirror ball, a soft toy, a hard box, or an unusual teether

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Clear the floor space and place one chosen object in the middle.
2. Observe the infant's reaction to the object and talk to the child about it.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Introduce an object that requires some form of attention to make it work. Observe the infant's or toddler's frustration threshold and reaction to cause and effect.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Create a social situation. Invite another toddler into the activity to observe each child's approach to the discovery of this new object, and to each other.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- This is a wonderful opportunity for one-on-one time.
- Doing this often allows an adult to observe each child's interests and the ways he or she approaches something new.



### **GUIDELINE 3: SENSE OF SELF**

Infants and toddlers show an awareness and appreciation of self as a unique and capable individual.

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

#### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Watch hands and feet with fascination
- Respond to others' attentions
- Notice and prefer people's faces, pictures, or drawing of faces to other objects
- Smile at mirrored image, even before self-recognition
- React to hearing own name

#### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Recognize body as belonging to self
- Point to parts of own body
- Show likes and dislikes
- Respond to directed requests
- Show pleasure when succeeding in a task or activity

#### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Name different body parts
- Select and explore chosen toy or material
- Engage in pretend or dramatic play, taking on different roles
- Point to and name familiar people in pictures
- Use the word "mine", value own property

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Provide individualized care throughout the daily routine
- Spend time with the infant, gazing at each other's faces, cooing, talking, singing or reading
- Encourage the infant to try new things

- Play with the child individually every day, following the child's lead
- Provide a safe environment for active exploration with time to become absorbed in the play or activity
- Describe, acknowledge and delight in the child's actions, explorations and accomplishments

- Provide opportunities for independence and practice of self-help skills
- Sing and play games involving the recognition of self, either physically or conceptually
- Ask about the toddler's family members, looking at pictures and talking about relationships

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Interesting items and areas that encourage a child's interactions, involvement, exploration and experimentation, e.g. mirrors, water and sand play areas, toys, etc.
- Objects that are a reflection of the lives of the child and his or her family, such as family photos, pictures, books, dolls, and food
- An area or box containing props for pretend play such as "dress up"

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**KNOWING I AM BOBBY**

Bobby is 12 months-old and spends most of his time home with Dad. Dad and Bobby are getting dressed to go outside and do their morning chores on the family ranch. "Bobby, let's go get your diaper and clothes on," says Dad. Dad places Bobby on a blanket on the floor. "Where's your belly? Where's your nose?" Dad asks. Bobby points to his belly and his nose and giggles. Dad circles Bobby's tummy and brings his fingers closer and closer to gently "buzz" Bobby's tummy. Bobby shrieks with anticipation of the end result of the game, as his eyes follow his dad's circling hand. "Here's your favorite red t-shirt," Dad says as he pulls it from the drawer. As Dad pulls the shirt over Bobby's head, Dad says, "Where's Bobby?" Bobby giggles as his head emerges from the shirt. "There's my big boy! Here's your sleeve. Can you poke your arm through here?" Dad asks. Both Dad and Bobby are smiling as his fingers peek out of the end of the sleeve. After they finish the dressing routine, they head outside, stopping by the hall mirror . . . Bobby and Dad wave at the mirror and say, "Bye-bye Daddy. Bye-bye Bobby."

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Take an interest in meeting physical needs

**SOCIAL:**

Take an interest in familiar routines with others

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Quiet down or get excited when hearing a familiar voice

**COGNITIVE:**

Repeat an action that has had an effect

*"There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way it treats its children."  
~ Nelson Mandela*

## ACTIVITY: MIRRORS

**Placing various mirrors where infants can see them engages them with images of themselves and others.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Mirrors made of plastic/acrylic
- Household mirrors in bathrooms and bedrooms

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Place the mirrors throughout the environment permanently mount them at a low level on shelves or walls, or use toys with mirrors.
2. Add other mirrors as interest increases, for example, next to the diaper changing area.
3. Respond to eye contact, perhaps by “entering” the mirror so the child sees you.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Place mirrors at various heights to engage infants who are pulling up or cruising.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Allow toddlers to change their appearance with the introduction of hats and other props.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Watch for recognition of self and others.
- Put some mirrors vertically, some horizontally, some diagonally.
- Safety - are they securely attached and unbreakable?





## **GUIDELINE 4: SELF REGULATION**

**Infants and toddlers manage internal states, feelings, and behavior, and develop the ability to adapt to diverse situations and environments.**

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Cry when hungry, tired or wet
- Settle down and relax when comforted
- Develop increasing consistency in sleeping, waking and eating patterns
- Calm self when upset with a regular self-soothing technique
- Have different kinds of cries for different needs

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Anticipate routine interactions when provided visual, auditory, or textural cues
- Shift attention away from a distressing event to manage emotions
- Use gestures or simple words to express and seek specific kinds of assistance in order to calm self
- Look to a familiar adult when trying to judge a situation
- Follow some consistently set rules and routines

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Continue to rely on adults for reassurance and help in controlling feelings and behaviors
- Recognize own needs and take steps to fulfill them
- Test limits and strive for independence
- Recover from being upset to return to play
- Begin to use words and dramatic play to describe, understand and control impulses and feelings

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Establish a consistent, trusting, and caring relationship with infants
- Cuddle, snuggle, and physically nurture the infant
- Establish routines for eating, sleeping, diapering and other regular activities while being flexible to meet his or her needs
- Accept an infant's expressions of a full range of emotions, calling attention to and providing names for his or her feelings

- Name your own emotions as well as describing emotions displayed by the child during everyday interactions
- Redirect the child to appropriate choices when confronted by strong emotions
- Set simple rules, allowing for choices, and recognize that a child's protests of limits are a normal part of development

- Establish a consistent daily routine designed to meet the individual needs of the toddler, allowing for active and quiet times and time to explore alone and with others
- Assist and encourage the use of language rather than aggressive actions when the toddler feels strong emotions
- Reframe situations in a positive light, to allow the toddler to see the options available to him or her for appropriate behavior and model a variety of ways to deal with your own strong emotions



**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Areas and equipment that invite a child to contribute to self-care routines such as diapering, feeding and eating, napping and resting
- Spaces and/or materials that allow the child to regulate his or her own emotions, e.g. cozy areas with books, soft toys, stuffed animals, and personal comfort items and dramatic play areas to act out roles and feelings
- Representations of important parts of the child's daily routine, e.g. a poster on the wall with pictures of what happens during a regular day or a calendar with pictures of regular activities on certain days

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**ADAPTING TO THE UNEXPECTED**

Neveah, a bright-eyed eight-month-old, wakes from her nap right on time and begins to cry. Mom comes into the dimly lit room, smiles into the crib and picks her up out of her crib while saying, "Are you hungry, Neveah?" Neveah smiles when she hears her name and sees Mom's face above her crib. Mom cuddles Neveah and walks to the living room. As soon as Neveah spies the rocking chair she starts kicking her legs and waving her arms. Neveah settles into their breast feeding routine, watching Mom's face and stroking her arm. A few moments later, Neveah's five-year-old brother and friends run into the room. Neveah stops breast feeding as she intently watches the older boys grab some cars off the floor and go running out the back door. The door slams with a loud bang behind them . . . Neveah's body stiffens and she begins to cry. Mom pats and comforts Neveah, saying, "That door was loud, wasn't it Neveah? It scared you didn't it? It's okay now." Mom continues to rock and cuddle Neveah until she is able to calm down. When it is quiet again, Neveah resumes nursing.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Eat to fullness

**SOCIAL:**

Look intently at familiar human faces

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Smile when spoken to or greeted with a smiling face

**COGNITIVE:**

Turn away from interactions that are too intense, then turn back to continue when ready

*"Babies are such a nice way to start people."  
~ Don Herrold*

## ACTIVITY: QUIET PLACES

**Infants and toddlers need time and space to learn the art of self-regulation. This activity introduces the concept of reading as a source of quiet and calm.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A variety of age-appropriate books, including board books, picture books, soft books, art books, etc.
- A soft, cozy, quiet area
- Time

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Create a space comfortable enough for you to remain with the infant for a good amount of time.
2. Sit quietly with the infant and read to him or her in a calm, soothing manner.
3. Keep the infant in close proximity and relax together.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Establish rituals for sleep that include quiet time with books. Encourage the infant or toddler to begin to recognize and anticipate this special time of day.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Help toddlers begin to identify their own emotions by naming them and suggesting quiet time with books as a choice for when they appear in need of calming.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- This is a wonderful relaxation activity for you as an adult, as well.
- Be aware of outside distractions and try to keep them to a minimum.
- You can introduce soothing music to accompany quiet reading time.



## GUIDELINE 5: EXPRESSION OF EMOTION

Infants and toddlers express a range of feelings through facial expressions, gestures, and sounds.

<p><b>As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:</b></p>	<p><b>BIRTH - 8 MONTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cry, use other vocalizations, facial expressions, or body language to express emotions and get needs met</li> <li>• Smile and laugh out loud</li> <li>• Show distress by crying, kicking legs and stiffening body</li> <li>• Coo when feeling comfortable</li> <li>• Exhibit wariness, cry or turn away when approached by someone unfamiliar</li> </ul>	<p><b>6 - 18 MONTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show affection through hugs and gestures</li> <li>• Recognize familiar persons, pets, or possessions in a variety of ways, e.g. facial expressions, words, gestures, or signs</li> <li>• Begin to express frustration and/or anger through facial expressions, hitting, biting, pushing, pulling, throwing, or grabbing</li> <li>• Express fear of the unfamiliar by moving closer to familiar adults or objects</li> <li>• Cling to familiar adult at departure time (separation anxiety)</li> </ul>	<p><b>16 - 36 MONTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use words to name emotions, e.g. happy, sad, angry</li> <li>• Express differing levels of emotional intensity in response to varied situations</li> <li>• Express deeper range of emotions, e.g. pride, embarrassment, disappointment, etc.</li> <li>• Respond to other's emotional reactions</li> <li>• Attempt to comfort others in distress</li> </ul>
<p><b>You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are aware that young infants cry to express a range of feelings and respond appropriately</li> <li>• Use words, gestures and facial expressions to interact with and support the infant's emotions</li> <li>• Take time to get to know the infant, and establish a relationship in which the infant can count on you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the values of families and cultural groups regarding emotional expressions, and learn from others' perspectives</li> <li>• Model facial expressions to display emotions and use descriptive language to explain your own emotions e.g. "I feel happy when..."</li> <li>• Model appropriate ways to express different feelings, using words to support the child's naming of emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize and understand that toddlers may need assistance in expressing feelings and may not be able to express emotions verbally</li> <li>• Tell stories and play games which allow the toddler to describe how they may be feeling in the moment, or how they might feel in a given setting</li> <li>• Share your own feelings with the toddler and begin to describe how you handle your emotions in different situations</li> </ul>

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Examples and displays of other children expressing emotions, e.g. a book of photos or pictures of children who are happy, sad, angry, etc.
- Areas that allow for self-expression and experimentation with emotions, such as space to dance happily, to throw soft objects at a target in frustration, to act out roles in dramatic play
- Art materials that can be used in an open-ended way and that are accessible to the child when desired
- Mirrors safely affixed at the child's eye-level

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**USING WORDS TO EXPRESS FEELINGS**

It is bright sunny morning at Grandma's house. Mom has dropped off three-year-old Bree for the day. In the warm kitchen, Grandma and Bree have just finished washing their hands for breakfast. Grandma places a bowl of cereal, a plate of toast and orange segments in front of Bree and sits down with her own breakfast. Grandma starts the conversation, "It is going to be a beautiful day, Bree. Would you like to go to the park?" Bree looks at her with a big smile, begins to wiggle in her chair, gives a clear "Yes", and proceeds to list off all the things she is going to do at the park when they get there. Her breakfast sits in front of her, untouched and getting cold. "Are you going to eat breakfast this morning?" Grandma gently reminds Bree of the food in front of her. Bree looks at the plate of food, frowns, and then tells Grandma, "Last night at my pink house we had a party for the pink birds and they had a great time, 'cept for the flowers, they got stepped on, and the grass, and the trees . . ." "Bree, can you take a bite of your toast so we can go to the park?" Grandma interrupts. Bree looks down, places her head in her hands and lays it down on the table. Grandma inquires, "What's the matter, Bree?" "I am frustrated," Bree replies. "Why?" Grandma asks. "I am frustrated and I don't wanna eat," Bree emphatically states. "Okay, okay. We will clean up and take a snack to the park in case you want to eat a little later," Grandma concedes.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Participate in regular family meals

**SOCIAL:**

Describe self using specific terms

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Speak clearly enough for familiar listeners to usually understand

**COGNITIVE:**

Make choices when given two or three options

*"Every child begins the world again."  
~ Henry David Thoreau*



## ACTIVITY: VELCRO LIDS

**Connections are made as children look at pictures of themselves, peers, or others on metal or plastic food container lids. The lids can be carried around or placed on or off a Velcro backing. (The backing may be mounted on the back of a toy shelf or another vertical surface.)**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Clean lids with smooth edges (metal lids from frozen juice cans work well).
- Clear Con-tact® paper
- Photos or pictures from magazines of a variety of facial expressions, small enough to fit on a lid
- Velcro with sticky backing
- Large piece of the loop side of Velcro mounted on a vertical surface, such as the back of a toy shelf

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Use clear contact paper to attach each picture to the side of the lid that has a lip around it.
2. Place a small piece of the hook side of Velcro onto the flat side of the lid.

3. Allow infants to look at, touch, and hold picture lids. You may then store them on the Velcro backing at eye-level for observation at any time.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Allow infants and toddlers to discover the lids on the Velcro backing and pull off, put on, and rearrange.
- Introduce containers to the activity for infants and toddlers to sort, hide, and carry.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Describe facial expressions on the lids that show feelings, such as happy, sad, mad, etc.
- Relate how a toddler feels in the moment by finding the corresponding feeling on one of the lids together.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Have a lot of lids for infants and toddlers to look at, hold, collect, sort, and carry around.
- Encourage turn taking and trading.
- Be available to observe and discuss the pictures.







Social Development

SOCIAL



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

### **Guideline 1: Attachment Relationships (page 46)**

Infants and toddlers show trust, a sense of security, and an emotional bond in relationships with familiar adults who consistently meet their needs.

### **Guideline 2: Adult Interaction (page 49)**

Infants and toddlers interact comfortably with familiar adults and seek assistance when needed.

### **Guideline 3: Peer Interaction (page 52)**

Infants and toddlers show interest in other children and begin to interact with peers.

### **Guideline 4: Feelings of Others (page 55)**

Infants and toddlers respond to others' feelings and recognize the effects of their own behavior on others.

### **Guideline 5: Social Identity (page 58)**

Infants and toddlers recognize similarities and differences between self and others.



*"If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder; he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, the excitement, and mystery of the world we live in."*

*~ Rachel Carson*

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social development is the increasing understanding that infants and toddlers gain of themselves and others and their emerging ability to relate to other people and the environment. **Attachment relationships** are at the heart of social development. Just as healthy attachment relationships support emotional development, so do these relationships contribute to the development of the child's social understanding and skills. In an attachment relationship, the child looks to the adult for guidance. Because secure attachment relationships are critically important for social as well as emotional development, the attachment Guideline appears in both of these domains.

**Relationships:** Support and guidance from adults are essential for infants' and toddlers' positive social development. Adults support social development by providing an appropriate environment, creating opportunities for responsive social interactions, and building stable relationships, including strong ties between a child's home culture and any outside caregiving environment. In secure relationships, infants and toddlers begin to show concern and empathy toward others. They also start to see themselves as belonging to social groups, in particular their **families**. As they grow, they also gain the necessary social skills (taking turns, negotiating, etc.) to interact with others. With proper support, infants and toddlers eventually develop the ability to participate in other **social groups**. Through play, they learn about working well

with others and how to solve interpersonal conflicts. At first they play alone, then side by side with other children, and finally, together with them. When children interact well, more learning can occur.

**Environment:** Continuity of care, ample time for adults and children to be together, guidance from adults, and consistent, predictable social experiences all contribute to stable, strong relationships and positive social development. **Continuity of care** refers to predictable care provided by consistent adults over time so that relationships can develop. Transitions between adults should be minimized because they can be stressful for the child, caregivers, and parents, and can interrupt the development of social skills and other emerging abilities. Adults can promote and model social skills such as empathy and being kind, which helps to foster solid relationships.

**Connection with Other Domains:** The ability to relate with adults and other children influences infants' and toddlers' development in all of the other domains. The underlying motivation to learn and explore the world around them is the desire for social contact. Language learning, problem solving, fantasy play and social games all depend on social skills. As a child's interaction skills grow, they learn from others through imitation and communication. Through social guidance and imitation, the child learns safety rules and basic health procedures, such as hand washing before meals. Language, both native and second, is learned through social context and close interactions. An understanding of how things work is fostered through shared discovery and observation of others.





## GUIDELINE 1: ATTACHMENT RELATIONSHIPS

Infants and toddlers show trust, a sense of security, and an emotional bond in relationships with familiar adults who consistently meet their needs.

As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:

### BIRTH - 8 MONTHS

- Turn toward the sight, smell or sound of a familiar adult
- Show preference for and seek comfort from a familiar adult
- Smile and reach to be picked up by a familiar adult
- Look intently at familiar human faces
- Exhibit separation anxiety, e.g. cry at the departure of a familiar adult

### 6 - 18 MONTHS

- Exhibit separation anxiety, e.g. cry at the departure of a familiar adult
- Look for the familiar when tired, hungry, upset or in a new situation
- Seek comfort from a favorite object, e.g. blanket, stuffed animal, pacifier
- Reconnect with familiar adult by making eye contact or physical contact from time to time when playing
- Display stranger anxiety when an unfamiliar adult gets too close or when left with an unfamiliar adult

### 16 - 36 MONTHS

- Use gestures, glances or words to stay connected to familiar adult
- Use stall techniques to keep familiar adult around a bit longer
- Feel comfortable playing away from familiar adult for a period of time
- Use imitation or pretend play to make sense of relationships and his or her world
- Understand that a familiar adult will return after departure

You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:

- Hold, cuddle, hug, smile at, laugh with, or otherwise interact with the infant
- Consistently and promptly respond to the infant's need for comfort and reassurance, react to the infant's cues and movements, and provide assistance when needed
- Provide a limited number of consistent caregivers that relate and interact to the infant on a regular basis
- Reinforce healthy partnerships between the infant's family and other caregivers

- Talking with and singing to the child frequently, particularly during feeding and diaper changes
- Listening carefully and with interest to what the child says
- Explain to the child what is likely to happen when you need to leave, always making sure that he or she knows you are leaving and being clear that you will return again

- Read and look at books with the toddler
- Set appropriate and consistent limits, acknowledging appropriate behavior
- Support the toddler during daily transitions, paying attention to his or her feelings even when circumstances cannot be changed

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Soft and comfortable places to spend one-on-one time with familiar adults
- A place for quiet interaction that allows time and attention to be focused on the child on a regular basis
- Items or pictures that provide a connection to the child's family members and other special people in his or her life, and to the home environment if being cared for outside the home
- A responsive and interactive line of written and verbal communication between an outside caregiver and a child's family

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**FORMING SECURE RELATIONSHIPS**

Aaron, a six-month-old boy, begins to wake from his nap and fuss. Sonya, the primary teacher notes that it has been about four hours since Aaron last ate. Aaron's crying intensifies as Sonja walks across the room. He balls his fists, kicks his legs at the crib slats and his face reddens. She goes over to his crib and smiles down at him "Are you hungry? Let's go get your bottle and eat," she tells him. Sonja reaches the crib, she smiles at him and leans into the crib to lift him out. His body relaxes, he reaches up to meet her ready arms and his crying subsides, turning into whimpering. As they walk over to the rocking chair, Aaron attempts to grab the bottle out of Sonja's hands. She says, "Do you want to help me?" They settle into the chair and Aaron gazes up at Sonja and eats. Aaron's body relaxes as Sonja smiles down at him and rocks him.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Reach for toys, objects, and people with both hands

**EMOTIONAL:**

Exhibits separation anxiety

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Use different types of cries for expressing hunger, discomfort, tiredness, fear, etc.

**COGNITIVE:**

Show excitement in anticipation of regular routines

*"The solution to adult problems tomorrow depends on large measure upon how our children grow up today."  
~ Margaret Mead*

## ACTIVITY: FAMILY BOOKS

**Infants and toddlers recognize themselves, their friends, and family in photographs. They especially enjoy laminated pages that are easy to hold, carry around, and look at with others.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Photographs of people familiar to the children: parents, siblings, grandparents, extended family, caregivers (and pets)
- Clear Con-tact® paper

- Heavy paper or thin cardboard for mounting photos
- Glue stick

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Find photos of people familiar to the infant, or ask families to bring in photos from home.
2. Create a book for each individual infant by mounting photos with glue and covering them in clear Con-tact® paper.
3. Show each child's book to them and talk about who is in each photo and their relationship to the child.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Respond to infants' and toddlers' excitement at finding their own family photos, along with answering questions and acknowledging comments.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Reflect questions back to toddlers: "Who does this look like?" "Who are these people?" "What is her name?"
- Engage toddlers in helping to make their own family books.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Store books in a library corner for easy access.
- Facilitate looking at the pages together, trading, and taking turns.



## GUIDELINE 2: ADULT INTERACTION

Infants and toddlers interact comfortably with familiar adults and seek assistance when needed.

As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:

### BIRTH - 8 MONTHS

- Engage in a social smile or mutual gaze
- Babble back and forth in response to a familiar adult's vocalization
- Match facial expressions with others
- Lift arms to be picked up by a familiar adult
- Cry to get needs met

### 6 - 18 MONTHS

- Follow a familiar adult's gaze to look toward a person or object
- Initiate interaction by pointing to an object or showing a toy to a familiar adult
- Take an interest in familiar routines with others
- Shy away from unfamiliar adults
- Smile and brighten expressions when seeing a familiar adult

### 16 - 36 MONTHS

- Ask questions to initiate interaction with a familiar adult
- Respond to requests made by familiar adults
- Pretend to "be" a familiar adult in play
- Ask for help verbally or with gestures when needed
- Maintain interaction with a familiar adult using conversation and play strategies

You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:

- Build a trusting relationship with the infant by consistently and promptly responding to his or her needs for comfort and reassurance
- Understand and respond to the temperament and personality of each individual infant
- Talk with and sing to the infant frequently, especially during feedings and diaper changes, provide opportunities for back and forth communication
- Limit the infant's transitions between adults

- Show respect for the child's cues regarding others in the environment
- Respond to the child's emotional and physical needs, verbal and non-verbal communications
- Show empathy and understanding to the child
- Enjoy reading books and looking at pictures together

- Build trust by providing support while he or she is interacting with others
- Listen carefully and with interest to what the toddler says and expand on the message
- Take time to be present not only physically, but with your full attention, for periods of time throughout the day

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Objects and items that encourage conversations and interactions with familiar adults, e.g. books
- A variety of areas that allow play with the child on his or her level throughout the day
- Space and time for quiet, relaxed interaction to allow for communication and connection

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**RE-CONNECTING**

Willow, a 16-month-old girl, is playing quietly with her blocks at her grandmother's house. When her mother walks into the room, Willow's expression brightens and she smiles. She stands up from where she has been stacking them and waddles to her mother as quickly as she can, carrying a block in each hand. "Blocks," she exclaims, holding them out to her mother. Her mother leans down, gives Willow a hug and says, "Yes, blocks. You have a blue one and a red one. You know what? It is time to go home. Let's pick up the blocks." Willow smiles at her mom, takes her blocks to the box and returns to pick up two more. As they continue to pick up blocks, Mom asks Willow what she did during her time with Grandma. Willow pauses occasionally while picking up the blocks to point out another toy or picture she created that day. Mom shares events of her day at work with Willow when there is a pause in the conversation. When all the blocks are picked up, Willow's grandmother helps her put her coat on, "It was a fun day, Willow. I will see you tomorrow and you can tell me all about your night." Mom and Willow wave good-bye to Grandma.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Build with blocks

**EMOTIONAL:**

Show pleasure when succeeding in a task or activity

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Demonstrate turn-taking in conversations

**COGNITIVE:**

Show excitement for a familiar adult

*"The key is curiosity and it is curiosity, not answers, that we model."  
~ Vivian Paley*



## ACTIVITY: MIRRORING

**Adults find themselves mirroring or imitating infants' facial expressions as a matter of course. Extending this mirroring to body gestures and verbal utterances connects adults and all ages of children over time, leading to an interactive game. Toddlers love to be the leader as adults mirror their movements, sounds, and actions. This reciprocal interaction between adult and child models a conversation.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- No materials needed for this experience

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Engage the child by making eye contact first. Then mirror an infant's facial expressions, sounds, or rhythms as they exhibit them. For example, respond to clapping by clapping your hands, blinking by blinking your eyes, waving by waving your hands.
2. Wait for a response before continuing, either repeating the same elements or adding new ones.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

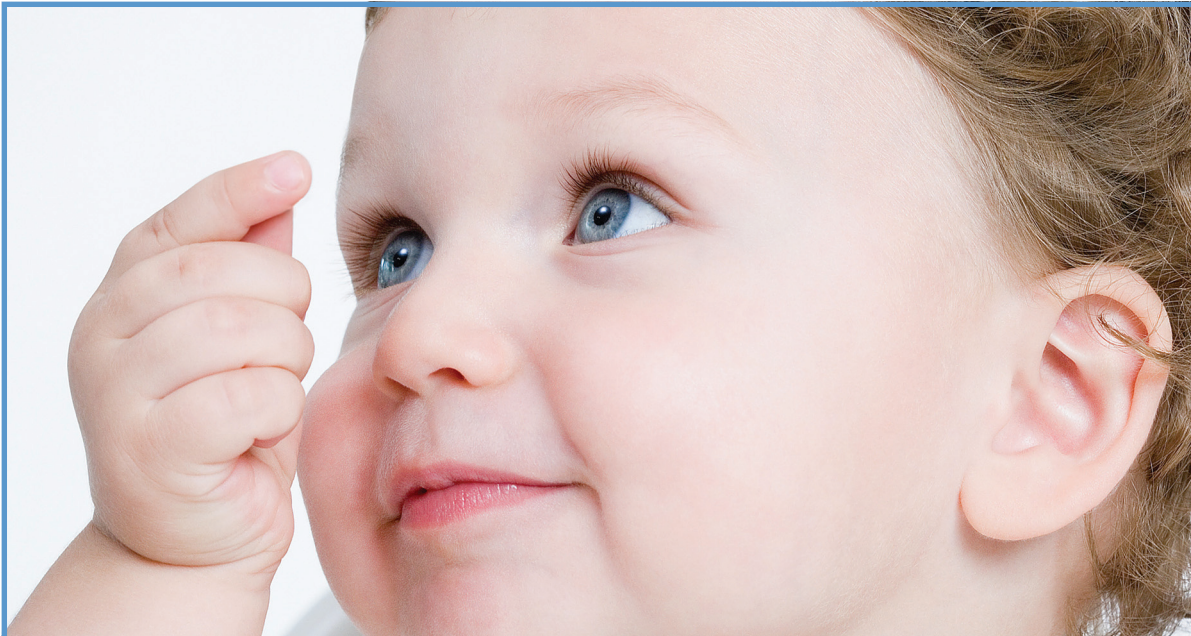
- Introduce the game of Peek-a-Boo to this activity. Infants and toddlers are working toward an understanding of **object permanence** at this age.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Toddlers may ask what you are doing. You can explain the activity, and then ask them, "Would you like to try?"
- Do with a group of children.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Be mindful of including all the senses when you are the leader.
- Take turns with the child of being leader and follower.



## GUIDELINE 3: PEER INTERACTION

Infants and toddlers show interest in other infants or toddlers and begin to interact with peers.

As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:

### BIRTH - 8 MONTHS

- Respond to the crying of another child by crying as well
- Babble back and forth with a familiar peer
- Explore another child's face and body by touching or patting
- Watch the activity of another child
- Resist the removal of a toy by another child

### 6 - 18 MONTHS

- Show interest and move toward the activity of another child
- Play side-by-side with another child using similar materials
- Initiate a social smile to another child or his or her own image
- Participate in turn taking when guided by an adult
- Engage in complementary interactions, e.g. rolling a ball back and forth

### 16 - 36 MONTHS

- Demonstrate enthusiasm in the company of other children
- Favor playing with one or two favorite peers
- Respond to another who takes away a toy
- Participate in turn taking
- Show an understanding of the concept of sharing

You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:

- Play with him or her where other children are nearby
- Play games that invite the infant to imitate your sounds, tone of voice, gestures or facial expressions (social communication)
- Give opportunities for him or her to interact with other children for short periods of time

- Provide opportunities for him or her to interact with other children and be part of a group, acknowledge sharing and helping behaviors
- Talk about what other children are doing and how they may be feeling, particularly noting and interpreting communication attempts
- Participate in or conduct group activities on a regular basis with singing and movement games, always allowing the option of not participating
- Provide more than one of a favorite toy to limit the challenges of sharing and turn taking and to promote parallel play

- Provide toys that can be played with by two or more toddlers at one time, being available to offer guidance if necessary
- Provide opportunities for you and your toddler to interact with children who have different family backgrounds, customs, beliefs, rituals and traditions. You will both soon recognize what all families have in common and learn to value differences.
- Give opportunities to share materials, work on group projects and participate in keeping the communal environment clean and safe through household chores or classroom duties

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Areas that facilitate and encourage dress-up and **role-playing** everyday activities
- Adequate space to allow the child to move away from interaction when needed, e.g. areas to be alone
- Become acquainted with the social and cultural framework in which the children you work with live to ensure that learning experiences, books and displays are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for all.
- Multiples of favorite items to limit challenges in sharing, as well as toys, objects, and materials that encourage **cooperative play**, e.g. two phones, two doll strollers

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**TAKING TURNS WITH A BALL**

Quinn, 32-months-old, and Henry, 34-months-old, are outside on the playground. It is a chilly, but sunny winter day. Quinn is partaking in one of his favorite games, playing with a beach ball, tossing it into the air and trying to catch it as it falls back to the ground, while Henry watches. Crystal, the lead teacher comes over to Quinn, "What if you rolled it to Henry? You two could take turns throwing and catching the ball." Quinn turns around looking for Henry. When he spies him on the edge of the playground, he calls out, "Henry, catch the ball!" Henry smiles and holds his arms out to catch the ball. Quinn throws the ball to Henry, who catches it on the second bounce. Henry tosses the ball back to Quinn who kicks out at it with his foot. He retrieves it from the bushes and throws the ball to Henry with a giggle. Henry chases after it, throws it back to Quinn, yelling out, "Here it comes!" and smiles.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Participate actively in simple movement games, dance, outdoor play, and other forms of exercise

**EMOTIONAL:**

Test limits and strive for independence

**LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION:**

Laugh or giggle at something they find funny

**COGNITIVE:**

Experiment with objects or tasks to achieve a result, adapting as the activity evolves

*"There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One is roots; the other, wings."  
~ Hodding Carter*

## ACTIVITY: FLOOR TIME

**Setting aside time for infants and toddlers to be together and interact is a vital part of their social development.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Safe and comfortable space

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Bring infants together in a small group where they can see and touch each other.
2. Be present and observe their interactions. Help the infants if needed to make this a positive social experience.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Introduce a toy or ball to the group that might stimulate interaction.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Organize an activity, such as making a group mural, that fosters interaction among the children.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Get down on the floor yourself.
- Encourage infants and toddlers to touch with gentle hands.
- Consider adding music to enhance the experience.



## **GUIDELINE 4: FEELING OF OTHERS**

**Infants and toddlers respond to others' feelings, and recognize the effects of their own behavior on others.**

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Smile responsively
- Turn away when overstimulated by others
- Match expression of another's face
- Respond to a sudden change of emotion in others
- Cry or grimace at the discomfort of others

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Interpret facial cues as emotional expressions
- Take notice of emotional state of others
- Seek cues (social referencing) from the familiar adult's expressions when in uncertain situations
- Show pleasure in the excitement of others
- Gently pat or hug to comfort another

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Provide comfort for a "crying" doll in pretend play
- Offer comfort to a child in distress by giving a favorite toy or blanket
- Ask about other's emotional states
- Attempt to humor an upset peer or adult
- Use words or gestures to identify feelings

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Talk about what feelings others may be expressing with their sounds, gestures, or facial expressions
- Are aware and respectful of cultural differences in the expression of emotions
- Model empathetic behaviors with adults, children, and animals

- Encourage the child to develop an understanding of the feelings, ideas and actions of others
- Accept that we all naturally have feelings and help the infant or toddler understand and name feelings
- Provide appropriate boundaries for behavior and action toward others, and gently remind the child of why such boundaries are in place, e.g. we do not push to get by someone because they might get hurt

- Provide opportunities to identify emotions by the use of pictures, posters and mirrors
- Provide opportunities for dramatic play with simple themes and props, including plays, themes and props from own and different cultures
- Talk about how his or her actions or behavior make you or another feel, and brainstorm together about how similar situations might be handled differently in the future



**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Examples of emotions and facial expressions available for the child to see, on a wall, mobile, book, etc.
- Materials and spaces for working through and experimenting with emotions, e.g. modeling clay, wood-working, digging sand, and puppets
- Areas in which a child can practice taking care of another's needs, such as a doll area, kitchen set, etc.
- Room to move and release pent up emotional energy and the permission to be loud if needed

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**REACTING TO OTHERS**

Five-month-old Morgan is holding a ball. She drops the ball, which rolls away. Her primary caregiver, Mark, responds with a look of delight and surprise! Morgan looks confused at first, but then her face lights up with a smile when she sees his expression, and they both clap.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Explore the environment through touch and taste

**EMOTIONAL:**

React to new situations and experiences in a consistent manner

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Transfer and manipulate an object with his or her hands

**COGNITIVE:**

Use sounds, gestures, and movements to impact the environment and interactions

*"Pretty much all the honest truth-telling there is in the world is done by children."  
~ Oliver Wendell Holmes*

## ACTIVITY: LEARNING TO CARE

**Modeling** responsive care is a key way that infants and toddlers learn about others' feelings. Infants and toddlers develop their sense of **empathy** through witnessing and experiencing kindness in their interactions with others.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Patience and understanding
- Baby dolls, blankets, and other care-giving props

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Model responsive care by attending to each infant's individual needs and cues (crying, fussing, squealing, eye contact, etc.).

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Introduce baby dolls and caregiving props into play. Model how to wrap a doll in a blanket and rock them to sleep.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Extend pretend caregiving play by naming feelings, asking questions, and commenting on interactions.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Understanding the feelings of others is a long-term growth process that begins at birth and needs to be practiced throughout the lifespan.
- The ability to empathize starts early when children are encouraged to think about how others feel.



## GUIDELINE 5: SOCIAL IDENTITY

Infants and toddlers recognize similarities and differences between self and others.

<p><b>As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:</b></p>	<p><b>BIRTH - 8 MONTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cry and expect others to meet needs</li> <li>• Respond to others attention</li> <li>• Change behavior when in a new setting</li> <li>• Respond to name</li> <li>• Begin to tell the difference between familiar and unfamiliar adults</li> </ul>	<p><b>6 - 18 MONTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play comfortably when in the presence of familiar adult</li> <li>• Use name to identify self</li> <li>• Respond to an action done regularly in routine</li> <li>• Point to body parts when asked</li> <li>• Express likes and dislikes</li> </ul>	<p><b>16 - 36 MONTHS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play comfortably across the room or yard from a familiar adult</li> <li>• Use pronouns "I" or "me" to identify self and say "she" or "he" to identify others</li> <li>• Display a sense of ownership</li> <li>• Name family members</li> <li>• Describe self using specific terms, e.g. "I am big"</li> </ul>
<p><b>You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect caregiving strategies between home and other environments, making it easier for the infant to learn and adjust to the differences</li> <li>• Use language cues and singing songs of any culture the infant comes into contact with regularly</li> <li>• Thoughtfully introduce the infant to new settings, people, and experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Model an appreciation for and respect for diversity</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for the infant and toddler to interact with children from diverse backgrounds</li> <li>• Connect cultural activities to concrete, daily life through hands on experiences, rather than "visiting other cultures" on special occasions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share your own family stories and traditions with your toddler.</li> <li>• You and your toddler can explore your community by going to the library, grocery shopping, visiting a park, attending a parade, visiting with neighbors, attending a festival, etc.</li> <li>• Use respectful terminology when discussing diversity</li> <li>• Invite parents and others in the community to share their stories, traditions and customs; avoid doing this only at holiday times. Ask them for suggestions of what to use for dramatic play props, materials for the art area, vocabulary words to introduce, and books to read.</li> </ul>

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Interesting objects and items that encourage the child's interactions, explorations and experimentation of the world and the effects of their actions on that world, such as a pot and a spoon
- Honor and respect are shown each child and family by displaying, or having on hand, **personally meaningful** manipulatives, pictures, books, artwork, music, keepsakes, tools, utensils, etc.
- Equipment that easily allows the infant or toddler to be taken into the surrounding neighborhood and community on a regular basis, such as a sling, backpack, or stroller

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**RECOGNIZING MY NAME**

David Ryan, a 20-month-old boy, is at his first day of child care. At first, David Ryan is quiet and clings to his coat. As the other children begin to sing their "Good Morning Song," he hesitantly joins in for the clapping section. When the other children welcome each other by name within the song, David Ryan points to himself and smiles when he hears his name.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Move toward interesting sights in the environment

**EMOTIONAL:**

Recognize body as belonging to self

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Sign or make motions for familiar games, songs, or finger plays

**COGNITIVE:**

Recognizes his name

*"Every child has a story to tell, and within that story is the secret to reaching her or him as a learner."  
~ Herb Kohl*

## ACTIVITY: COLLAGE OF FACES

**This gluing experience uses cutout pictures of children's faces, including all ethnic variations, all hair and eye colors, glasses, and hearing aids, if possible. The variety inspires children to comment on similarities and differences and make connections.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Photos of children's faces cut from magazines or photos
- Choices of paper for gluing onto
- Glue in shallow bowls and brushes (water soluble school glue aids clean-up)
- Trays

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Make a collage of faces using the materials listed, making sure to include a variety of diverse people.
2. Hang the collage at eye-level, or place it on the floor to allow infants to see and explore.

### EXPANDING LEARNING

#### FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Have the infant or toddler help create the collage. Have materials ready ahead of time and well organized for easy access and choice by the child.

### EXPANDING LEARNING

#### FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Respond to the toddler's comments and reactions to the faces. Expand their recognition of physical characteristics with comments like "Yes, she has brown eyes like you do." Don't be afraid of questions about skin color or other visible physical differences, but respond matter-of-factly, using phrases like: "Yes, her skin is lighter than yours." Or "those are hearing aids. He wears them to help him hear better."

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Consider ahead of time how you will respond if toddlers make negative comments about the pictured faces. Be prepared to follow through by introducing different stories and people so children will learn respect for all and become more comfortable with diversity.
- Children may focus on the experience of gluing instead of on the faces, and that is okay.











## COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### **Guideline 1: Social Communication (page 64)**

Infants and toddlers are active participants in their social world and communicate with others in appropriate ways for themselves, their families, and their communities as a tool for interaction.

### **Guideline 2: Listening & Understanding (Receptive Language) (page 67)**

Infants and toddlers use listening and observation skills to learn language and other forms of communication.

### **Guideline 3: Speaking and Communicating (Expressive Language) (page 70)**

Infants and toddlers use sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and eventually signs or words to communicate wants, needs, and feelings.

### **Guideline 4: Early Literacy and Emerging Reading (page 73)**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate interest and show enjoyment of pictures and the sounds and rhythms of language in books, stories and songs, and begin to understand the meaning of basic symbols.

### **Guideline 5: Early Literacy and Emerging Writing (page 76)**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate interest in symbols as a form of meaningful communication and develop the small muscle abilities required to hold a writing tool and make marks.



*"Still, in a way, nobody sees a flower really, it is so small, we haven't time. And to see takes time like to have a friend takes time."*

*Georgia O'Keeffe*

## COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Language development is the emerging ability of infants and toddlers to communicate successfully with others to build relationships, share meaning, and express needs in multiple ways. Infants from every culture come into the world ready to communicate with sounds, words, and gestures. Their earliest cries let adults know that they are hungry, wet, or want attention. Their facial expressions and body language communicate pleasure and discontent. They coo and babble when others talk to them to continue a "conversation." As they grow, their babbles turn into words and soon, sentences, whether verbally or through other forms of expression, such as sign language.

**Relationships:** There are two benefits for a child who sits in an adult's or sibling's lap to listen to a story. The first is the enjoyment of looking at the pictures and hearing the story. The second is the pleasure of snuggling with the loving person who is reading. Both prepare children to be lifelong readers. The period from birth through age three is a time for young children to learn what reading and writing are all about and to enjoy, explore, and experiment with aspects of both. It is not appropriate for children of this age to be expected to read letters and words, or write letters and numbers. Reading comes later, after they have had plenty of exposure to pictures, books, and stories. Writing

follows after they have had experiences that strengthen the muscles in their hands and fingers, and have been encouraged to draw and scribble. Many children in infant and toddler care programs live in families with a home language other than English. Learning their home language is an important part of their identity development, their self-concept, their relationships at home, and their ability to develop concepts and thinking skills.

**Environment** Children are surrounded by the messages of language. Some messages come from spoken sounds and words, others from gestures and observations that are seen but not heard, and still others come from pictures and written materials. When children are surrounded by spoken language or other meaningful communication, they repeat the sounds and words they hear or see and learn how to put sentences together and ask questions. When they see people reading and are exposed to many books, they learn that reading is enjoyable and valuable. Writing is learned similarly, through a print-rich environment. Children observe others writing and imitate them. At first the marks on the page look like dots and squiggles. Eventually, they begin to look like shapes that will later become letters and numbers. A positive environment that is rich in language, both spoken and printed, supports communication and language development.

**Connection with Other Domains** The development of communication and language skills during the infant and toddler years supports development in all of the other domains. It helps infants learn about healthful routines, regulate their actions and thinking, understand their emotional experiences, and get along with others socially. It also lays the foundation for the acquisition of skills necessary to learn to read, write, and communicate effectively with others in school. By the end of the toddler period, a young child's ability to understand and express spoken language or use sign language prepares him or her to hear and understand the sounds of spoken language (phonological awareness); continue to understand and use new words (vocabulary acquisition); and communicate through listening or watching (receptive language) and speaking or signing (expressive language).



## **GUIDELINE 1: SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**

**Infants and toddlers interact and communicate with others in appropriate ways for themselves, their families, and their communities.**

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Gaze at familiar adults
- React to name, turning head toward speaker
- Smile and vocalize to initiate contact with a familiar adult
- Participate in "conversations" by making sounds and waiting for responses from others
- Respond to the attention of others

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Use non-verbal gestures for communication, e.g. waving "good-bye"
- Participate in one-on-one "conversations" by making sounds or using signs or words
- Play Peek-a-Boo and other simple games
- Ask for something wanted or needed using words or gestures
- Initiate communication with others

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Demonstrate turn-taking in conversations
- Make a related comment during a group time activity
- Follow simple verbal and non-verbal directions
- Laugh or giggle at something they find funny
- Sign or talk to other children as they play by them

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Respond with pleasure and excitement at child's attempt to communicate
- Are patient and listen carefully during "conversations"
- Use everyday routines and other naturally occurring opportunities to talk and interact with the infant throughout the day

- Provide opportunities for interaction with other children and adults
- Play games that involve turn-taking with the child
- Value and celebrate the child's home language, as well as the community language, and find ways to bridge the two

- Provide opportunities for dramatic play, e.g. using a play phone or "writing" a message
- Provide opportunities for the toddler to learn and practice culturally and socially acceptable courtesies
- Allow the toddler to participate to his or her ability in a variety of conversations with people of differing ages and backgrounds

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Examples of different communication styles and methods, including ways to interact without verbal language, e.g. posters showing common sign language words, pictures of people from various cultures demonstrating non-verbal cues
- An atmosphere that exposes the child to alternate forms of communication, e.g. listening to music, watching a dance performance, etc.
- Areas that encourage interaction between the child and others around them, including uncluttered spaces, soft places to sit, and quiet moments to communicate

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**A CONVERSATION BETWEEN FRIENDS**

Standing in line at WalMart, Marci notices an alert five-or six-month-old child in a baby seat in the cart in front of her. The child seems to be actively searching for someone to engage. As the child looks at Marci's face, Marci smiles widely and says, "Peek-a-boo."

The child giggles and smiles back. Marci looks at the child and says "Peek-a-Boo" again; the child giggles and coos and looks expectantly at Marci.

As Mom notices the smiling and cooing, she says to her child, "Are you having fun playing?" The child turns her head and gives her mother a full-body smile. As mom goes back to checking out, the child turns toward Marci and coos again.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Sit steadily without assistance

**EMOTIONAL:**

Express several clearly differentiated emotions

**SOCIAL:**

Match facial expressions with others

**COGNITIVE:**

Coo, squeal, or laugh when a familiar adult talks and plays games with them

*"Kind words can be short and easy to speak,  
but their echoes are truly endless."  
~ Mother Theresa*

## ACTIVITY: PHOTO ALBUMS

**Children enjoy looking through small photo albums with pictures. This give and take between you and the child are delightful beginnings of social communication.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Small photo albums holding twenty-four or thirty-six photos
- Photographs of children, their families and friends

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Put the photos into small one-photo-per-page albums.
2. Allow children to be on your lap as you turn the pages and talk about the pictures.
3. Encourage infants and toddlers to turn pages themselves, at their own pace. Be aware of the child's interests and allow time for them to respond.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Ask simple questions about the pictures to encourage conversation and language.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Set them out on tables or shelves where children can discover them, or keep them in the library corner.
- Be available to talk about the photos. Ask questions that lead to conversations, such as "Who does it look like?" or "What are you doing in this picture?"
- Add names and words to pictures.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Consider taking photos throughout a typical day, so that the child can recognize familiar routines, places, and people.
- It is also possible to laminate photographs or place them in zip-lock plastic bags so the toddlers may carry them around.



## GUIDELINE 2: LISTENING & UNDERSTANDING (RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE)

Infants and toddlers use listening and observation skills to make sense and respond to language and other forms of communication.

As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:

### BIRTH - 8 MONTHS

- Quiet down and turn his or her head toward a familiar voice or sound
- Show preference for human voices over other sounds
- Watch a person's face and hands when he or she is talking or gesturing
- Smile when spoken to or greeted with a smiling face
- Respond to speaker's tone of voice, such as becoming excited or soothed

### 6 - 18 MONTHS

- Quiet down or get excited when hearing familiar voices
- Turn toward and look at a person calling his or her name or speaking to them
- Vocalize or gesture in response to another person's voice or gestures
- Look at or point to familiar objects when named or asked where they are
- Follow one-step directions

### 16 - 36 MONTHS

- Laugh or smile when told a silly rhyme or story
- Respond to action words by performing the action
- Follow two-step directions
- Attempt to find objects being talked about by another
- Answer simple questions using short two-word or four-word sentences

You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:

- Allow the infant time to respond with gestures, actions, or sounds to simple requests or questions
- Name and describe the people, objects, and noises that the infant comes into contact with
- Surround the infant with gentle conversations, soft music and other pleasant sounds

- Follow the child's lead by describing his or her actions and sounds
- Engage the child in songs, rhymes, finger plays, stories, games and echo activities that require the child to repeat what they say
- Provide a language-rich environment by sharing stories, games, and picture books with the child that are fun to look at, talk about, and read together

- Encourage the development and maintenance of the toddler's first language in the home, as well as the shared community language
- Expand on the toddler's communication and answer questions
- Give opportunities to participate in language-rich activities, e.g. being read to, being talked to, being included in conversations, playing listening games, taking part in finger plays, poems, dancing and listening to books on tape

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Stories, songs, words, games and daily schedules written out in English and any other language spoken in the home
- Items that offer auditory stimulation, e.g. musical instruments, rattles, shakers
- Music player with music that contains a variety of styles, rhythms, tempos and beats
- Unobstructed space that allows familiar adults to capture the child's attention and supports focus on messages being conveyed

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS**

On a sunny Saturday afternoon, 18 month-old Molly's family takes their lunch to the park. While Mom and Dad place the blanket and set out the food, Elijah, Molly's five-year-old brother, grabs a ball to play with. Elijah says, "Let's play ball, Molly!"

Molly looks at her brother just in time to see the ball bounce toward her. The ball rolls right past her, and Elijah says, "Where's the ball? Get the ball!"

Molly turns around and around, looking for the ball. Elijah points to the ball, next to a tree behind her. Molly toddles over to the ball, squats down, and picks it up with both hands. She looks at her brother with a big grin and throws the ball toward him.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Squat to pick up an object

**EMOTIONAL:**

Feel comfortable playing away from familiar caregivers for a period of time

**SOCIAL:**

Participate in turn-taking when guided by an adult

**COGNITIVE:**

Experiment with the effects of own actions on objects and people

*"Every child needs someone whose heart beats a little faster at his first smile, his first step, his first words."  
~ Lillian Katz*



## ACTIVITY: EVERYTHING HAS A NAME

**Sometime in the later part of their first year, infants realize that everything has a name. Adults can recognize when this occurs and respond to the infant's expression of interest in learning language and building vocabulary.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- No materials needed for this experience

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Watch infants' facial expressions as you talk to and play with them.
2. Use words. Infants understand and delight in facial expressions and words.
3. Tell infants what you are going to do during their daily routines (diapering, bathing, feeding, napping).

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

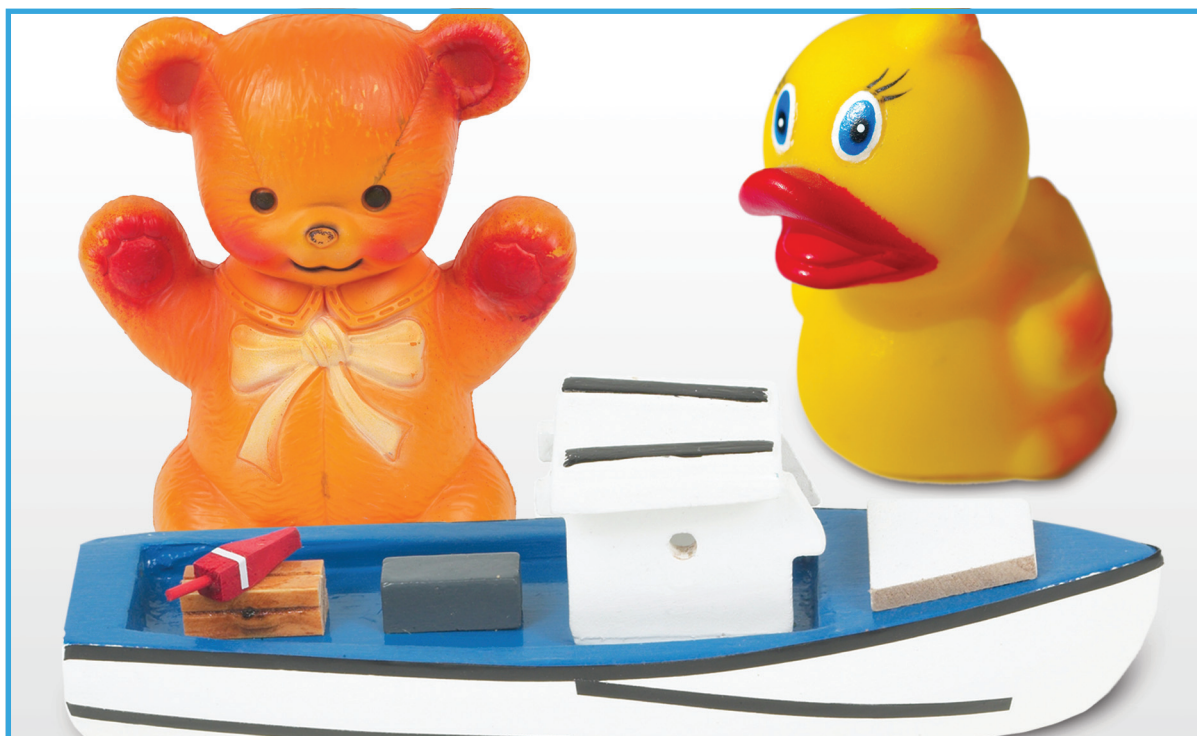
- Listen for the "What's that?" question which is sometimes accompanied by pointing. Many babies use pointing to ask the name of things or use words or phrases like, "Whatsit?" "Dat?" or "Whazat"
- Name the item for the child.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Name the item for the child. Then describe or expand the name, such as "Yes, that is a ball. It is a round, red ball."
- Introduce concepts like size, color, texture, shape, taste and smell.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Later on, the child will ask "Whatsit?" as a tool to get the adult to ask him the question, because now he knows the name.
- Go for walks and field trips to the library, store or park and name things of interest to the child.
- Respond to child-initiated interactions.



### **GUIDELINE 3: SPEAKING & COMMUNICATING (EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE)**

Infants and toddlers use sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and eventually, signs or words to communicate wants, needs, and feelings.

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

#### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Use different types of cries for expressing hunger, discomfort, tiredness, fear, etc.
- Experiment with making different sounds, e.g. make cooing sounds and other sounds of home language
- Imitate vowel sounds, e.g. "ah," "oh," or "oo"
- Smile or vocalize to initiate social contact
- Make sounds or signs in response to being talked to

#### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Produce own sounds or babble to self
- Use familiar gestures, e.g. waving good-bye and hello, as well as some words or signs, e.g. "milk," "up," or "more"
- Point to an object to communicate a desire
- Respond to questions or simple requests with a nonverbal or verbal answer
- Use consistent sound combinations or signs to indicate specific objects or persons

#### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Imitate and use new words or signs in context
- Repeat simple rhymes, songs, or parts of previously heard stories
- Ask others to label unfamiliar objects
- Use words or sign language to convey events that are happening in the present
- Speak clearly enough for familiar listeners to usually understand

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Imitate sounds or gestures the infant makes and allow time for the infant to respond
- Introduce and model new sounds, gestures, and words to the infant
- Respond to the infant's cues and communications to express needs or wants

- Provide opportunities and encourage the child to experiment with words
- Tell stories, sing songs, and play name games with the child
- Build on the child's interests by introducing new words and ideas during play activities and daily routines
- Use a variety of communication strategies to encourage the child to describe events

- Provide opportunities for the toddler to engage in conversations with others
- Provide opportunities during the day for sharing stories, ideas and personal events
- Foster an atmosphere of being heard and valued
- Intentionally use new vocabulary with the child

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Items and objects that encourage face-to-face interactions, e.g. books, puppets, dolls, mirrors
- Examples of infants and toddlers communicating with their families and others through pictures, posters, and books
- Areas that provide opportunities and encourage interaction with peers and other people
- Examples of alternative methods of communication, such as books demonstrating common signs

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**USING SIGN LANGUAGE TO EXPRESS THOUGHTS**

Working with the Family Support Specialist (FSS), the Wonder Years Child Care program uses sign language to communicate with 14 month-old Bobbie. To stay current with the signs Bobbie is learning, the teachers use a communication book that goes back and forth between the program and the FSS. During snack time, Bobbie signs "eat," "more," or "cup," and the teacher and other children use these signs and say the word for them as they talk to each other about what they are doing.

Bobbie is deaf, but is learning to use his voice as well as sign language. During play time, teachers play vocal and sound games with him and the other children at a floor-level mirror. As other children join them, they watch Bobbie or imitate each other in the mirror. Specific touches to his face and his touching the teacher's face help him discover what it feels like when the voice starts and stops. Daily music time gets Bobbie moving to the strong beat. Everyday objects such as the telephone are used to encourage Bobbie to use his voice during play.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Seek out and explore new textures, shapes, and materials within the environment

**EMOTIONAL:**

Anticipate routine interactions when provided visual auditory or textural cues

**SOCIAL:**

Show interest and move toward the activity of another child

**COGNITIVE:**

Imitate real life experiences

*"While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about."  
~ Angela Schwindt*

## ACTIVITY: PUPPETS

**Young children are fascinated by talking to and with a puppet. Puppets encourage children to practice expressing themselves.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Homemade or commercial puppets (socks, mittens, paper lunch bags work well)

- Low tables and boxes make good stage settings
- A wall-mounted mirror or an attentive adult as an audience

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Put the puppet on your hand and use intonation in your voice to talk to, kiss, tickle the baby and tell stories.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Make the puppets available, help children try them on and play with them.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Tip over a low table onto its long edge for toddlers to kneel behind like a stage, or try puppets in front of a mirror.
- Encourage children to name and identify the puppets' characteristics to help get them started. Use phrases like:
  - Please tell us about your puppet. What is your puppet's name? What does your puppet like to do?
  - How does your story begin? Then what happens?
  - Thank you for giving us a puppet show!

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Some children need more encouragement and modeling with puppets to feel comfortable.
- Puppets are a great way to express feelings, try on roles and problem solve.



## **GUIDELINE 4: EARLY LITERACY & EMERGING READING**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate the beginning understanding of the symbols, sounds and rhythms of language.

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Kick feet or move arms in response to rhythms of spoken words or songs
- Look at books, pat the pictures, bring books to mouth, etc.
- Listen and attend to repetition of familiar words, songs, or rhymes
- Show increasing awareness of sounds and spoken words by focusing on the speaker
- Show pleasure when being read to

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Sign or make motions for familiar games, songs or finger plays, e.g. "Pat-a-Cake," Peek-a-Boo
- Point at or name objects, animals, or people in photos, pictures, and drawings
- Attempt to position pictures in books right-side-up
- Purposefully interact with books, e.g. turn pages, look at the pictures, and make sounds or words
- Ask to be read to, requesting favorite book to be read repeatedly

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Repeat several simple songs, rhymes or stories
- Use books, magazines and other printed matter in a useful manner during play
- Associate pictures with actions
- Recognize print or symbols in their neighborhood, community and environment
- Bring a favorite book to a person to read, look at, turn pages and name people or objects in the book

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Hold the infant while reading or looking at books
- Provide the infant with board, cloth and plastic books that can be manipulated and explored
- Make books with pictures from the infant's daily life, including familiar routines, family members, cultural background, and home language

- Talk, read, sing, repeat rhymes, do finger plays, or tell stories while encouraging the child's participation
- Identify and talk about familiar pictures, drawings, favorite photos, toys and household objects
- Select books that have clear, colorful pictures with simple text that engage the senses and reflect a variety of cultures

- Explore a variety of printed materials with the infant or toddler
- Point to the words of a book while reading
- Point out common signs in the neighborhood, community, and environment
- Incorporate print found in the toddler's everyday life into dramatic play



**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- A variety of things that contain printed language, e.g. children's books, newspapers, magazines, empty food containers in dramatic play
- Labels to create a **print-rich environment**, with pictures, posters, or symbols that correspond with the object, area or activity
- Soft and cozy places for looking at and reading books
- Audio books available for listening to and looking at

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**READING THROUGH PICTURES**

It is getting late and bath time is almost done. After rinsing two-year-old Zoey's hair, Dad takes her out of the tub, bundles her in a towel, and heads for the bedroom. "No sleep," she protests, "Want Mommy!"

"Mommy's working, but she'll be home soon," says Dad. "Time to get jammies on so we can read our bedtime story." Dad sighs with relief as he knows the bath and book time routine will work its magic in calming Zoey.

Settling in for a story, Zoey picks out *Owl Babies* from the two books Dad offers. "Great," says Dad. "Let's see if we can find the part in the story when the owl mommy comes home." Cuddled up together, Dad and Zoey look at the pictures of the snowy owls. Zoey points to her favorite owl "Little Bill." Listening intently, she waits in anticipation for the picture of the mother owl. Together Dad and Zoey shout, "And she came!" when the mother owl flies back to the nest. "See!" Dad says, "Mommies always come back!"

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Participate in healthy routines

**EMOTIONAL:**

Test limits and strive for independence

**SOCIAL:**

Understand that a familiar adult will return after departure

**COGNITIVE:**

Make choices when given two or three options

*"Every child is born a genius."  
~ R. Buckminster Fuller*

## ACTIVITY: STORY TIME

**Infants and toddlers enjoy daily story times with an adult (or an older child). Being read to fosters early language and sets the stage for later reading.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- A variety of children's books: board, cloth and other picture books

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Hold the child and settle into a comfortable spot to share the book with the child.
2. Talk to the child as you read the book.
3. Let the child explore, touch and manipulate the book.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Have children point and talk about what they see.
- Have children help you turn the pages.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Ask children what might happen next.
- Have children identify the feelings of the characters.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Use story time as part of a nap or bedtime ritual to help calm the child or children.
- Sometimes books may be chosen to coincide with a family interest, happening, or current developmental issue, such as a new sibling, toilet learning, or camping.
- Let children bring you the book of their choice.



## **GUIDELINE 5: EARLY LITERACY & EMERGING WRITING**

**Infants and toddlers demonstrate interest in symbols as a form of meaningful communication.**

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Develop the small muscle control to grasp a rattle
- Transfer and manipulate an object with his or her hands
- Focus on high contrast objects
- Watch others write or draw pictures
- Manipulate soft materials (food, soft ball, mud) with fingers or hands

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Point to words or pictures in a book
- Imitate others who are writing
- Pick up a small object with the tips of thumb and forefinger
- Use a variety of writing tools, e.g. crayons, markers, or paint brushes, to scribble and make marks on paper
- Experiment with holding an object with different types of grips, e.g. holding a pencil with his or her palm and all fingers

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Use symbols or pictures as representatives of oral language, e.g. pretend to take orders in a pretend restaurant with pencil and paper
- Attempt circles or lines
- Choose to use crayons, markers, paint brushes, or chalk to draw and create
- Ask a familiar adult to label a picture that he or she has drawn
- Point to pictures or text while being read to
- Put things in a line like small cars, blocks, and animals

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Provide opportunities for the infant to manipulate rattles, toys and soft ball
- Point out the letters and words as they read with the infant
- Encourage the infant to explore with his or her hands and fingers

- Identify and talk about familiar pictures or symbols on toys and household objects, and draw attention to signs and symbols in the environment
- Provide opportunities to experiment and imitate writing using a wide variety of writing tools and writing surfaces
- Model writing for meaningful purposes, e.g. letters and notes

- Write the toddler's comments at the bottom of drawings, collages, or photos
- Create joint projects with the toddler that involve writing
- Provide opportunities for the toddler to tell stories out loud while writing down what they say and reading it back to them
- Allow the toddler to put his or her own symbol(s) for name on drawings, etc.
- Provide small, safe toys to line up

## **Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- A variety of writing tools, e.g. large sheets of paper, large crayons and pencils, paint and brushes, markers, sidewalk chalk, sticks to draw in dirt, note pads, clipboards, etc.
- Displays of the child's creations, posted at his or her eye level
- Printed materials easily accessible to the child
- Toys and materials that encourage grasping and manipulating for increased strength and muscle control

## **A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

### **THE WRITING ON THE PAPER**

One fall morning, Marianne, the preschool teacher for the two-year-old classroom, puts paper and four trays of paint colors at the art table. The paint colors reflect the colors of the leaves falling from the trees outside. Two different trays hold toothbrushes and sponges of various shapes. On the shelf close to the art table are numerous other items available to use with the paint and paper. Brandon (24-months), Mason (28-months), Caitlyn (30-months), and Colton (34-months) are wearing smocks and standing at the table ready to paint. Marianne sits close by ready to help and encourage the children. Brandon dabs paint onto the paper with a sponge. He turns to the shelf, points at a pizza cutter, and says, "pay dough?" Marianne gets the pizza cutter and while handing it to him, says, "We usually do use this to cut play dough, but I thought it would be fun to try it in the paint. See what you think." After several passes on the bare table with the pizza cutter, Brandon pushes it through the paint and onto the paper. He turns to Marianne and says, "Write!" "Yes, you wrote on your paper Brandon," she confirms. Meanwhile, Mason brushes over and over on the same spot on his paper. "You're painting your paper over and over, Mason. You're filling your whole paper with red paint," Marianne observes softly. Caitlyn is making green dots with a sponge and then swiping the sponge from top to bottom on the page. "I see you made green lines on your paper with the small

yellow sponge," comments Marianne. There are many circles and lines in a row on Colton's paper. Each mark has been made a different color with a different toothbrush. He is telling everyone a story about the leaves he is making on his paper. Marianne offers to write down his story at the bottom. "Then everyone would know the story of the leaves, Colton," Marianne tells him.

## **Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

### **PHYSICAL:**

Scribble with a crayon or marker and use a paint brush

### **EMOTIONAL:**

Select and explore chosen material

### **SOCIAL:**

Display a sense of ownership

### **COGNITIVE:**

Ask simple questions



## ACTIVITY: CRAYONS AND MARKERS

**This most basic art experience gives infants and toddlers the opportunity to express themselves. A child's first marks and scribbles on paper, and opportunities to hold crayons and markers, are the first steps to writing.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Non-toxic and washable crayons and markers
- Paper in various colors, sizes, and textures
- Baskets or bowls to hold the crayons and/or markers

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Offer crayons as the child shows the ability to hold and manipulate them.
2. Model how a crayon makes marks on paper.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

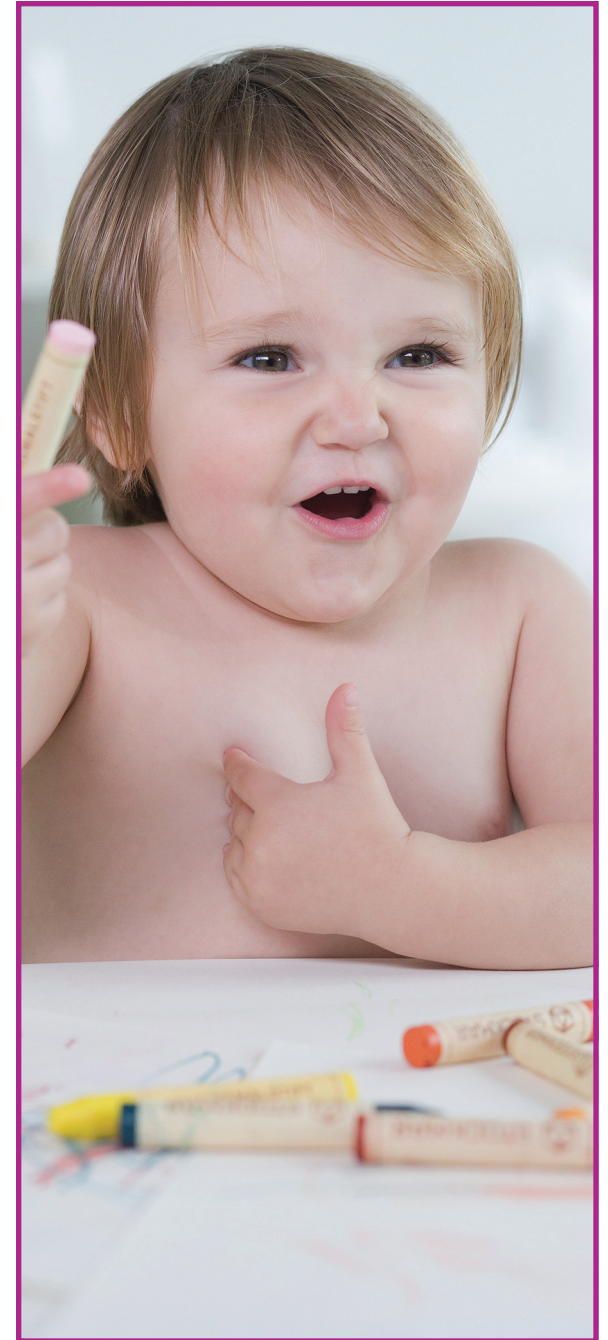
- Give children the choice between markers, crayons and types of paper.
- Encourage discussion about their work by saying, "Tell me about your drawing."

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Ask children if they would like you to write words on their picture and then write exactly what they dictate.
- Ask the child permission to write their name on their work or encourage them to do so (in their own unique way!)

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Infants and toddlers naturally put things in their mouths to explore them, so supervision is critical.
- Don't expect your child to draw identifiable objects. Scribbles and random marks lead to more representation in their drawings later.
- Show children that you value their work by displaying it on a refrigerator or bulletin board.







# Thinking Skills & Cognitive Development



## THINKING SKILLS & COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

### **Guideline 1: Approach to Learning (page 82)**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate curiosity and develop an understanding of basic concepts and relationships through playful, purposeful exploration and discovery.

### **Guideline 2: Application of Knowledge (page 85)**

Infants and toddlers apply emerging knowledge and understanding of prior experiences to new situations.

### **Guideline 3: Problem Solving (page 88)**

Infants and toddlers develop strategies for solving problems through focus, persistence, reasoning, and creativity.



*"Play is the purest, more spiritual activity of man."  
~ Friedrich Froebel*

## THINKING SKILLS AND COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

**Cognitive development is the building of concept knowledge and thinking skills. Through relationships, active exploration, and experiences, infants and toddlers make discoveries about the world. Infants and toddlers are motivated, curious, and competent learners right from the start. They are natural scientists and, like scientists, young children uncover the mysteries of the world.**

**Relationships:** Relationships are at the center of early cognitive development. Young infants are fascinated with their caregivers' faces and voices. They learn through give-and-take interaction. As infants grow older, they use **attachment relationships** as a secure base for exploration. At the toddler age, children ask questions and share meaning with those around them. As children's cognitive abilities grow, they gain a sense of mastery over their world. They develop memory skills and can remember where they left their favorite book and get it to read with a familiar adult. They learn about their family, community, and the roles people play. To promote cognitive development, adults should take cues from infants and toddlers and be responsive to the children's interests and needs. Research has documented that **responsive care** has positive influence on children's long-range cognitive development.

**Environment:** When provided a stimulating, nurturing, and safe environment, infants and toddlers use all their senses to explore their surroundings. In exploring their environment, they begin the process of discovery. Each object they encounter brings them face-to-face with information. They learn that their actions can cause something to happen – pushing a button makes a train move, for example. They learn concepts like up, down, more, less, big, and small. They explore the outdoors and learn about wind, rain, sand, flowers, leaves, and bugs. Children notice the similarities and differences among objects



and begin to organize them into categories. All four-legged animals might be called "doggie" for example, and all vehicles on the road "car." But it is unlikely that the child would mistake a four-legged animal for a four-wheeled vehicle. Soon, the child's thinking becomes more refined and cats, dogs, and horses and cars, trucks, and buses can be identified separately. In addition, adults need to set up an environment that is both appropriate and challenging for the age and stage of each child. For children with disabilities or other special needs, specific adaptations to their abilities are necessary. The environment should be well organized and predictable. Providing a variety of age appropriate, easily accessible materials allows all infants and toddlers opportunities to pursue their passion for learning and discovery.

**Connection with Other Domains:** Cognitive development grows hand-in-hand with the other developmental domains. Physically healthy and emotionally secure infants can focus on exploration and learning. Infants' growing ability to move their bodies allows them to explore environments and manipulate materials in increasingly complex ways. As infants and toddlers build concepts, language gives them a means to represent ideas and share meaning with others. **Symbolic play** not only enables children to experiment with concepts, it also gives them a means to explore social roles and feelings.



## **GUIDELINE 1: APPROACH TO LEARNING**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate curiosity and develop an understanding of basic concepts and relationships through playful, purposeful exploration and discovery.

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Notice and imitate gestures, such as opening and closing his or her mouth, sticking out his or her tongue, or opening and closing his or her hand
- Focus on familiar adult voice or face
- Use mouth and hands to explore objects
- Coo, squeal or laugh when a familiar adult talks and plays games with them
- Turn head and follow with eyes when a new person or object enters his or her field of vision

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Reach toward a new object, grasp it and explore it
- Repeat actions to see effects again and again
- Attend to and examine small objects, e.g. crumbs, bugs or pieces of paper
- Reach for familiar adult during interactions
- Imitate real life experiences

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Identify and name familiar objects people
- Use familiar objects to represent other things, e.g. using a block moving across the floor as a car or a piece of newspaper as a blanket
- Experiment with how things move
- Classify colors, shapes, and other properties when sorting toys and other objects
- Ask simple questions

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Imitate the infant's facial expressions or noises and watch to see if he or she imitates back, occasionally repeat or modify the gesture, action or behavior
- Allow the infant time to explore through looking, touching, reaching, and mouthing objects
- Provide opportunities for uninterrupted experiences in play and exploration to allow time for discovery

- Watch and comment on the infant or toddler's explorations, and the use of substitutions for real objects
- Interact with the infant or toddler by asking simple open-ended questions and responding to questions
- Introduce play with sand and water and other sensory experiences, e.g. play dough

- Allow the toddler the opportunity to repeat favorite activities
- Provide opportunities for the toddler to express self creatively
- Provide opportunities for pretend play with simple props, including real objects, i.e a cup, spoon, or telephone
- Allow time to observe people, objects, and events, and the opportunity to play with representations of what's observed, e.g. taking out toy trucks after stopping at a construction site

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Areas that encourage solitary play, exploration, and relaxation
- Items that are accessible and available throughout the day for observation, exploration, experimentation and manipulation
- Examples of patterns in the environment, with objects that allow for the creation of simple patterns, such as rocks of different colors, shapes, and sizes

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**PLAYING TO UNDERSTAND**

Samantha, 23-months-old, and her family have just welcomed a baby boy, Oliver, to their home. Samantha has returned to child care after spending time adjusting to the addition in her life. As Samantha enters the housekeeping area with her baby doll, she sits the baby in the high chair and digs through the pretend food choosing a chicken leg, mashed potatoes, and an egg roll. She places the pretend food in the pretend microwave oven and pushes the start button. While "waiting" for the food to finish cooking, Samantha turns and smiles to her baby doll in the high chair. As she moves the food to the table she bites into the chicken leg and blows on the mashed potatoes before feeding her baby doll. "Bite, Oliver!" she says as she places the spoon to the doll's mouth. After a few minutes of feeding the doll she removes it from the high chair and sits down on the floor. She begins to feed the doll a bottle on her lap and then says, "All done." She turns the baby doll on its stomach and pats it's back gently. After she has burped the doll, she changes the baby's diaper and combs it's hair. Samantha then walks over to the play crib, humming a nameless tune and places the baby in the crib. She covers the doll with a blanket and says, "Night night, Oliver."

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Carry object while walking

**EMOTIONAL:**

Begin to use words and dramatic play to describe, understand, and control impulses and feelings

**SOCIAL:**

Name family members

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Repeat simple rhymes, songs, or parts of previously heard stories

*"There are no seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child. There are seven million."  
~ Walt Streightiff*

## ACTIVITY: COLORED CELLOPHANE

**Colored cellophane is one of many materials that can stimulate curiosity in children about light and color.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Various colors of cellophane (can be purchased at craft stores)
- A sunny window
- Cardboard and tape to make a frame

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Tape shapes of different colors of cellophane to a sunny window.
2. Help the child look through and touch the window.
3. The colors on the floor will change as the sun shines through the cellophane and they will want to explore it.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Mount the cellophane between cardboard frames so that children can hold them and experiment with the light and color on their own.
- Talk about what they see and help them learn the names of the colors.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Encourage experimentation with two or more frames of color to overlap, blend and create new colors.
- Ask questions about what is happening and what they see.
- Introduce flashlights to shine through the cellophane.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Be creative with light, shadow and colors with other materials.



## GUIDELINE 2: APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Infants and toddlers apply emerging knowledge and understanding of prior experiences to new situations.

As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:

### BIRTH - 8 MONTHS

- Stare intently at new faces, objects and pictures
- Show excitement in anticipation of regular routines
- Smile in recognition and show excitement when a familiar adult approaches
- Repeat an action that has caused a reaction with a toy in the past
- Show apprehension when an unfamiliar adult enters the room

### 6 - 18 MONTHS

- Track an object that moves out of the line of sight or is partly covered, e.g. gain **object permanence** or knowing that something exists even when out of sight
- Repeat an action that has had an effect
- Display recognition and excitement about a previously enjoyed game or toy
- Show excitement for a familiar adult
- Show a like or dislike for activities, experiences, and interactions

### 16 - 36 MONTHS

- Try a new way of doing things and begin to take some risks
- Notice changes in environments and alter behaviors based on past events
- Acknowledge familiar people within the family and community
- Imagine the whereabouts of an object or person that is out of sight
- Choose one activity over another and pursue it for a brief period of time

You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:

- Interact with the infant in a consistent and predictable way
- Provide opportunities for the infant to try the same action on different objects
- Provide many opportunities for **active exploration**

- Follow the child's lead in daily activities and allow time for choices to be made
- Provide the child with toys and objects that react to specific actions or are similar, but produce different results
- Provide opportunities for the child to take reasonable and safe risks
- Narrate the child's play, describe what they see, hear, and do and comment when the child applies knowledge to a new situation (**descriptive language**)

- Try out new tasks with the toddler, talking with the toddler about his or her ideas for next steps and predicted outcomes
- Invite the toddler to share thoughts and ideas about the world around them
- Follow an established, simple routine for everyday activities, so the toddler will learn to anticipate what will happen next and start preparing for activities independently

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, and spaces:**

- Situations, events, and people to observe, experience, and discuss
- Materials that act in different ways under different circumstances, such as dirt, water, mud, and snow
- Areas where surprises or new experiences can occur, such as a box where you can place a new object for the child to find on a regular basis

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**KNOWING WHERE TO LOOK**

Cole, who is 29-months-old, notices the sun shining outside. He exclaims to his grandmother, "Sun shining, shoes on?" Cole and his grandmother enter the backyard where streams of sunlight are peeking through the leaves of the big cottonwood tree. Cole quickly runs to the corner of the yard to retrieve a large red ball from under the lilac bush. Cole throws the ball up into the air and the wind carries it high over his head and over the top of the bush. Cole loses sight of the ball in the bright light of the sun, but runs to find it behind the bush when it lands.

Cole looks around the yard to locate his grandmother and smiles at her when he sees her sitting on the porch folding clothes. Cole sees the family cat, which is sleeping in the pools of sunlight, and runs to it. He picks the cat up to cuddle it explaining, "I'm giving' you a love, Lucky." After a moment, Lucky begins to squirm and manages to free himself from Cole's grip. Cole looks after the cat, and switches his attention to the ball again. He throws the ball to the cat saying, "Catch the ball, Lucky!" Lucky strolls out of the yard. Cole points to the gate where Lucky disappeared, and says, "Bye-bye, Kitty. Meow, meow." Cole's grandmother asks Cole where the ball went and Cole searches the yard with his eyes, retrieving the ball from the flower bed.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Throw at a target

**EMOTIONAL:**

Use gestures, glances, or words to stay connected to familiar adult

**SOCIAL:**

Respond to requests made by familiar adults

**COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE:**

Use words or sign language to convey events that are happening in the present

*"Children are the message we send to a time we will not see."  
~ John Whitehead*



## ACTIVITY: OUTDOOR MAZE

**Young children are intrigued by the challenges offered by a maze constructed with various types of equipment. They will try to figure out what sized openings they fit through, and where they might need to stand, crawl or climb.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- Fabric tunnels
- Large, soft, safe blocks
- Tires
- Sheets or tarps
- Soft surfaces, such as picnic blankets
- Large boxes
- Pillows
- Tape

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Use soft blocks and pillows to create safe challenges. Keep it simple.
2. Encourage and help the child to crawl over, through, around, under and behind items.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Construct a maze using more challenging equipment like boxes and tires.
- Continue to offer words and concepts like over, through, under, next to, around, etc.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Masking tape on the floor can create walking challenges for balance (try zig zag, curvy and straight lines).
- Children also enjoy helping to plan the construction of the maze.

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Plan the maze to be interesting and safe for children at various developmental levels.
- Children can help to plan, paint, and decorate the boxes used in the maze.



## **GUIDELINE 3: PROBLEM SOLVING**

Infants and toddlers develop strategies for solving problems through focus, persistence, reasoning, and creativity.

**As an infant or toddler grows and develops, you may observe him or her begin to:**

### **BIRTH - 8 MONTHS**

- Cry to get needs met
- Explore objects by mouthing, banging, shaking, or hitting them
- Repeat simple motions or activities, e.g. drop an object and watch it fall
- Use sounds, gestures and movements to impact the environment and interactions
- Turn away from interactions that are too intense, then turn back to continue when ready

### **6 - 18 MONTHS**

- Generalize ideas based on past experiences
- Seek assistance to solve problems using vocalization, facial expressions, or gestures
- Demonstrate how familiar objects are used in combination
- Expect a familiar routine to be the same each time, and respond when it is changed
- Experiment with objects or tasks to achieve a result, adapting as the activity evolves

### **16 - 36 MONTHS**

- Experiment with the effects of own actions on objects and people (cause and effect relationships)
- Complete simple projects or tasks
- Notice and describe how items are the same or different
- Make choices when given two or three options
- Try several methods to solve a problem before asking for assistance

**You can support the growth and development of an infant or toddler when you:**

- Allow the infant to explore in a safe and stimulating environment
- Provide consistent positive responses, engaging the infant in routine activities
- Positively acknowledge when the infant tries new things, e.g., describe what you see

- Play games that support the understanding of basic concepts, such as object permanence, e.g. Peek-a-Boo
- Demonstrate, explain, and engage the child in trying new things in different ways, showing how different experiences relate to one another (cause and effect relationships)
- Talk out loud or otherwise demonstrate possible solutions while problem solving

- Play games that have multiple solutions
- Provide opportunities for the toddler to create and complete different types of projects, valuing the process of creation over the outcome of the final product
- Help the toddler make generalizations about people, animals, objects, and experiences
- Offer choices in problem solving
- Ask toddlers open-ended questions, e.g. "How should we fix this?" or "What could we do with this?"

**Indoor/outdoor environments that support an infant's or toddler's growth and development may include the following materials, equipment, spaces:**

- Open-ended materials and objects that invite experimentation and risk-taking
- Rotating items, areas, and arrangements that encourage the infant or toddler to build on prior accomplishments and rise to new challenges
- Areas where the infant or toddler can be sure his or her toy or project will be kept safe when he or she must leave it, to allow recurring efforts to understand an idea or solve a problem over time

**A picture of what growth and development may look like for this Guideline:**

**EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF ACTIONS**

Kaden, who is six-months-old, has just finished his breakfast of rice cereal and apricots. Dad places him on the floor and hands him his favorite rattle and tag-blanket. He shakes the rattle and then passes it from hand to hand, dropping the tag blanket as he does. Kaden looks, studies, and mouths the rattle while shaking it for several minutes. After a while Kaden begins to fuss and squirm. "I think it is time to clean-up and get dressed for the day." Dad prepares the bath water and assembles the soap, washcloth and bath towel. He chooses a clean outfit and diaper. While picking Kaden up from the floor where he has been playing, Dad says, "Let's get undressed for your bath." Kaden is excited, gurgling and kicking his feet as his clothing comes off. Dad lifts Kaden into the tub; Kaden kicks the water and retracts his feet, pleased and surprised by the splash. Dad says, "I think that you like the water. Do you want to hold the washcloth?" Kaden smiles with delight and grasps the washcloth, immediately putting it in his mouth. Dad methodically washes Kaden's body, while telling him what body part he is washing and which one will be washed next. Dad starts to sing "Six Little Ducks", at which Kaden scrunches up his face and looks away. Dad notices that Kaden has stopped smiling, so he stops singing. At the silence, Kaden looks to him to see what's next. Dad says, "I think you are all clean, " as he lets the water out of the tub and gathers Kaden in a big towel.

**Overlapping growth and development of skills in this Guideline are related and connected to other domains:**

**PHYSICAL:**

Explore the environment through touch and taste

**EMOTIONAL:**

React to new situations and experiences in a consistent manner

**SOCIAL:**

Show preference for and seek comfort from a familiar adult

**COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE:**

Show increasing awareness of sounds and spoken words by focusing on the speaker



## ACTIVITY: PUZZLES

**Puzzles offer infants and toddlers practice at hand-eye coordination and problem-solving when adults guide and encourage them to keep trying different strategies.**

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A variety of puzzles and simple toys increasing in complexity, such as:

- Three-dimensional shape sorters
- One-piece puzzles with knobs
- Two- to four-piece puzzles with knobs
- Interlocking puzzles with two to sixteen pieces for toddlers

### WHAT TO DO:

1. Let children put their own toys into containers and dump them out. Boxes, baskets and/or bowls work well.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 6-18 MONTHS:

- Show children how to turn all of the pieces right side up.
- Make simple shape sorters available.
- Allow them the time to figure out where the piece goes and help them turn it or make it fit so that they are successful.

### EXPANDING LEARNING FOR 16-36 MONTHS:

- Help children see the piece as a part of the whole and match shapes, lines and colors to fit.
- Give children lots of verbal encouragement, using phrases like "Try turning the piece around."

### OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Be aware of the difficulty of the puzzles or shape sorters so that they are challenged but not frustrated.
- Step in to assist the child in being successful without doing it for them.







# Information



# RESOURCES

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)  
[www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)  
(800) 424-2460

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)  
[www.nafcc.org](http://www.nafcc.org)  
(800) 359-3817

National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC)  
[www.nccic.org](http://www.nccic.org)  
(800) 616-2242

Zero to Three  
[www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)  
(800) 638-1144

Association for Childhood Education International  
[www.aeic.org](http://www.aeic.org)  
(800) 423-3563

The Children's Defense Fund  
[www.childrensdefense.org](http://www.childrensdefense.org)  
(800) 233-1200

The National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies  
[www.naccrra.net](http://www.naccrra.net)  
(703) 341-4100

Teaching Strategies, Inc.  
[www.teachingstrategies.com](http://www.teachingstrategies.com)  
(800) 637-3652

Early Head Start National Resource Center  
[www.ehsnrc.org](http://www.ehsnrc.org)  
(202) 638-1144

Ounce of Prevention Fund  
[www.ounceofprevention.org](http://www.ounceofprevention.org)  
(312) 922-3863

WestEd Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers  
[www.pitc.org](http://www.pitc.org)  
(877) 493-7833

Touchpoints  
[www.touchpoints.org](http://www.touchpoints.org)  
(857) 218-4451

Child Care plus+ The Center on Inclusion in Early Childhood  
[www.ccplus.org](http://www.ccplus.org)  
(800) 235-4122

Department of Public Health & Human Services/ Early Childhood Services Bureau  
[www.childcare.mt.gov](http://www.childcare.mt.gov)  
(866) 239-0548

Parents, Let's Unite for Kids (PLUK)  
[www.pluk.org](http://www.pluk.org)  
(800) 222-7585

Montana Early Childhood Project  
[www.mt.ecp.org](http://www.mt.ecp.org)  
(800) 231-6310

Montana Association for the Education of Young Children (MtAEYC)  
[www.mtaeyc.org](http://www.mtaeyc.org)

Montana Head Start Association  
[www.headstartmt.org](http://www.headstartmt.org)  
(406) 449-6265

Montana Parent Information and Resource Center (MPIRC)  
[www.montanapirc.org](http://www.montanapirc.org)  
(800) 914-1927

Montana Resource and Referral Network  
[www.montanachildcare.com](http://www.montanachildcare.com)  
(866) 750-7101

The Center for Early Education and Development  
[www.education.umn.edu/CEED/default.html](http://www.education.umn.edu/CEED/default.html)  
(612) 625-3058

The National Institute for Early Education and Research  
[www.nieer.org](http://www.nieer.org)  
(732) 932-4350

Consumer Product Safety Commission  
[www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)  
(301) 504-7923

Public Broadcasting Service  
[www.pbs.org/teachers](http://www.pbs.org/teachers)  
[www.pbsparents.org](http://www.pbsparents.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Act Early  
[www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)

Success By Six  
[www.bornlearning.org](http://www.bornlearning.org)

Center for Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning  
[CSEFEL.uiuc.edu](http://CSEFEL.uiuc.edu)

American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)



# GLOSSARY

**Active Exploration:** behaviors that infants and toddlers use to investigate, study, and learn more about the environment around them

**Attachment Relationships:** the strong, affectional tie that humans feel toward special people in their lives; for children it is the formation of a relationship in which the infant or toddler trusts primary caregivers to meet their needs, especially their need to feel safe and secure

**Authentic Assessment:** a systematic examination of the child's learning and development that occurs within the child's normal routines over many points in time

**Cause and Effect Relationships:** the result of actions on objects and people

**Communication Strategies:** differing ways that infants and toddlers use to express their ideas effectively to others

**Community Language:** the unique way in which people belonging to a social group interact and communicate with one another

**Continuity of Care:** consistency in people and routines in an infant's or toddler's life over time

**Culture:** the shared attitudes, beliefs, histories, customs, values, and social or family practices that generally characterize a particular group of people

**Descriptive Language:** a running narrative about activities or behaviors an infant or toddler is doing

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** the result of making decisions about the well being and education of children based on at least three important kinds of information or knowledge: 1) what is known about child development and learning; 2) what is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child in the group, and; 3) knowledge of the social and cultural context in which children live (NAEYC, 1997).

**Differentiated Emotions:** to express a variety of emotional states and feelings

**Diversity:** the differences among living organisms, specifically humans, in culture, ethnicity, beliefs, and customs

**Domain:** broad areas or categories of children's learning and development

**Dramatic Play or Symbolic Play:** children use props, plots, and roles in their pretend play to help them understand their world

**Eat to Fullness:** eating to appetite until the stomach is comfortable and satisfied for now, without fear or worry and free of any external influence, control, force, bribe, or reward. "Eating to fullness" is the healthy feeling that is the result of eating a meal under normal circumstances

**Empathy:** an ability to understand and identify with someone else's feelings or problems

**Ethnicity:** a dimension of culture based on cultural heritage, nationality and religion

**Evidence-based Practice:** complex and conscientious decision-making which is based not only on the available evidence, but also on characteristics and situations

**Eye-hand Coordination:** the control of eye movement to hand movements

**Family Foods:** an individual family's own diet and style of eating based on culture

**Family:** the primary social group of people who share common beliefs. The definition of "family" varies across culture and according to social norms

**General/Generalization:** to apply common characteristics to similar objects, e.g. all animals with four legs are dogs

**Home Language:** the primary language spoken in a child's home

**Individualized Care:** caregivers response to each child's needs, interests, and strengths

**Interaction Style:** the individual way in which a child responds to others



**Large (Gross) Motor:** skills that involve use of large muscles, such as walking and climbing

**Manipulate:** to explore an object's attributes through all of the senses. Children build small muscle skills by manipulating objects such as blocks, play dough, etc.

**Modeling:** children learn by watching others, adults and children. Children practice or imitate what they are seeing.

**Nurturing:** to foster the development of infants and toddlers through responsive care and thoughtful interactions and routines

**Object Permanence:** knowing that an object still exists when not in sight

**Open-ended Materials:** objects that have multiple and infinite possibilities for exploration and creation

**Open-ended Questions:** questions that do not have a right or wrong answer

**Play:** how children build knowledge and learn about their world. Stages of play are:  
Unoccupied Play – the child performs random movements that do not seem to have a goal  
Solitary Play – child plays alone

**Onlooker Play:** the child watches other children play

**Parallel Play:** the child plays separately from others, but near other children; perhaps with toys like those the others are using or in a manner that mimics their play

**Associative Play:** occurs when play involves social interaction with little or no organization

**Cooperative Play:** involves social interaction in a group with a sense of group identity and organized activity

**Preference:** to express a like for something over another

**Primary Caregiver:** the adult responsible for the care and education of an infant or toddler. A primary caregiver may be a teacher, parent, guardian, foster parent, grandparent, or other significant family member

**Primary Relationships:** with the people who consistently interact with an infant or toddler on a regular and consistent basis

**Print-rich Environment:** written words or print are prevalent in the environment encountered by infants and toddlers, (e.g. books, labels, lists, posters, signs, literacy materials for reading and "writing"), and used in everyday ways

**Respectful Terminology:** using words and phrases that put the child and family first with regard to development, individual and cultural differences, e.g., a child who can't hear, a child with a disability, a family from a foreign country

**Responsive Care:** being available to acknowledge and meet the child's needs, desires, and cues

**Role-playing:** pretend play that represents everyday actions and routines to gain understanding of something or someone

**Routines:** essential activities that take place on a regular basis and/or at a regular time, e.g. eating, diapering, napping

**School Readiness:** entering school ready to learn, with strong social/emotional skills and a positive attitude toward learning

**Self-help Skills:** feeding self, dressing self, grooming, helping out around the house, and toileting

**Self-regulation:** controlling or redirecting one's impulses or natural inclinations

**Self-sooth:** techniques used to calm oneself and settle emotional upsets

**Sense of Wonder:** seeing magic and delight in the world

**Sensory Materials and Experiences:** objects and events that stimulate the senses

**Separation Anxiety:** upset state resulting when an infant's primary caregiver leaves

**Small (Fine) Motor:** motor skills that involve finely tuned movements and small muscles of the body, such as finger coordination and dexterity (development)

**Social Cues:** prompts for understanding and responding to behaviors, also known as social referencing

**Social Group:** an organization of people that interact with one another

**Social Smile:** a smile that occurs in response to another person's stimulation - such as a smile, voice, or look

**Stranger Anxiety:** distress shown by infants and toddlers toward unfamiliar adults, beginning around six months of age

**Surprise Elements:** an item or activity that causes amazement or wonder

**Temperament:** an innate set of traits and characteristics that infants are born expressing as a preferred way of interacting with the environment

**Tourist Approach:** a patronizing approach to multicultural education that teaches children about other cultures through artifacts, food, traditional clothing, and celebrations that often are stereotypes

**Tummy Time:** opportunities provided by adults for infants to spend time on their stomachs to strengthen neck and other muscles and prepare them for crawling





## FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF INFANT & TODDLER GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

It is well documented that growth and development in the early years is fundamental to children's success in school and life. There is also ample evidence linking high quality early care and education programs with future and life-long learning. This section describes the roles and relationships of a number of specific issues including assessment, brain research, and developmentally appropriate practice to infants' and toddlers' growth and development.

**Alignment:** *Montana's Early Learning Guidelines: 3-5 were consulted during the writing of the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers to ensure flow between the foundations for learning and the standards set by Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) for kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. In the Joint Position Statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists in State Departments of Education entitled *Early Learning Standards: Creating the Conditions for Success*, it is made clear that early childhood is a unique period of life. The Position Statement asserts that this period serves as the foundation for later learning, and has value outside of preparation for elementary school. The Position Statement further explains that early learning guidelines:*

*should be built forward, from their earliest beginnings, rather than being simplified versions of standards for older children. The result will be a more powerful content and more valid expectations for early learning and skill development. With this process, early learning standards do align with what comes later, but the connections are meaningful rather than mechanical and superficial (NAEYC and NAECS/SDE, 2002).*

**Assessment:** Assessment is used to determine an infant's or toddler's growth and development across the developmental domains. Using the results of assessment, teachers and families are prepared to meet the developmental and learning needs of each child. The purpose of monitoring each child's development over time is to identify the interactions, activities, and environments that encourage the child to build on his or her existing knowledge and skills, to work with all the people involved in the child's life, and recognize when others may need to become involved to benefit the child's growth and development.

**Brain Research and Development:** The brain is made up of brain cells, connected to one another by synapses. It is by way of the synapses that information is passed from cell to cell. Infants go through a critical period of "synaptical exuberance," or growth, immediately after birth and during the first year of life. Synaptic growth corresponds with whole branches of brain cells that

receive and process signals in the brain. The greatest growth of branches and synapses occurs during the first five years of life. As a child's brain develops, it goes through several "critical periods," or developmental phases in which the brain requires certain environmental input or it will not develop normally (Murray, 2007). The exceptionally strong influence of early experience on brain architecture makes the early years of life a period of great vulnerability, as well as great opportunity for brain development. A growth-promoting environment with adequate nutrients, free of toxins, and filled with social interactions with an attentive caregiver, prepares the developing brain to function optimally (NSCDC, 2007). All domains of development and learning are closely related and critically important. To teach young children well involves fostering their development and learning in all domains (NAEYC, 2008).

**Connections of Domains:** Children's learning cannot easily be divided into separate domains. Infants and toddlers are learning all the time, and integrate their learning in each area across everything they do (ELG 3-5, 2004). Individual development and learning is constructed on a continuum that builds on prior experience and knowledge, crossing over to other areas of development. Growth, development and learning for infants and toddlers should be incorporated into typical everyday routines and naturally occurring "teachable moments," as well as carefully planned activities throughout the day.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:**

Developmentally appropriate practice results when decisions about the well-being and education of young children are based on what is known about : a) child development and learning; b) the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child; and c) the social and cultural context in which each child lives. It is essential for caregivers to know and understand the growth and development of young children, both as individuals and as a group, and provide a variety of rich and challenging age learning experiences. Childhood is a unique stage in human development, and must be appreciated as such (NAEYC, 2006). All children have the right to be treated as individuals with unique strengths, interests, and approaches to learning. Early care and education must address the “whole child” and be consistently working with children on multiple levels. Learning opportunities must be provided that recognize that development is continuous and sequential across areas of growth and learning. Developmentally appropriate practice is, in the simplest terms, an effort to provide nurturing care and learning activities, materials, or toys that promote each individual child’s development.

**Environments:** The environment sets the stage for children’s learning. The environment is reflected in the way the physical space is dressed up, lived in, defined, and refined over time – the nuances, memories, and suggestions of the spaces created for children (Wurm, 2005). Infants and toddlers have the right to experience - and feel part of - the world right from birth. To achieve optimal development, infants and toddlers require

environments that are physically safe, filled with challenging and stimulating learning opportunities, and emotionally nurturing (Gerber, 1980). Environments should be created with respect to the family and cultural backgrounds of the children who play there (Gandini, 2001). The environment includes spaces for ongoing play activities and routines. It should be warm, welcoming and safe, and encourage exploration.

**Health and Wellness:** Children, as our most vulnerable citizens, rely on parents and caregivers to meet their needs. Basic human needs include love and emotional security, food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. When these basic needs are met, infants and toddlers can take full advantage of learning opportunities. Adults should be able to recognize when children’s needs are compromised or neglected, and know the proper steps to take to ensure their safety and health. Health and wellness means more than just being free from illness and injury. It means having one’s needs met by dependable adults who are making and modeling healthy choices and teaching the child to make such choices for themselves over a lifetime. Research shows that general health is a critical indicator of a child’s success in school (Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2002).

**Inclusion:** Infants and toddlers have the right to the supports, resources, and services they need to participate actively and meaningfully in early childhood settings. Because of the uniqueness of each child, the services and interventions provided must be responsive to the young child’s needs and patterns of development, taking into consideration the

whole child and family (DEC, 2005). Quality programs practice inclusion to address the needs of all children. Caregivers must be prepared to work together with families, following the parents’ lead. They must make referrals when children’s development appears delayed, collaborate with children’s Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) teams, modify/adapt program activities and routines (make reasonable accommodations), and implement appropriate interventions within the context of the early childhood setting (DEC/NAEYC, 1993). Programs should be prepared to work with a child’s team on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) as the child turns three years old or moves out of the program.

**Individuality:** Every infant and toddler approaches life in a unique way based upon his or her temperament, prior experiences, and environmental circumstances. How the people around infants and toddlers understand and respond to these individual differences has a significant impact on a young child’s growth and development. Appreciating and understanding how individual children approach the world allows caregivers to respond to each child’s needs.



**1. Temperament:** Each of us is born with a unique set of characteristics that determine how we approach the world around us and build relationships with others. Researchers (Thomas, Chess, and Birch, 1968) have identified nine different temperament traits that are displayed from birth:

- Activity level: how much energy one needs or exhibits
- Biological rhythms: the regularity of one's patterns of sleeping, eating, or eliminating
- Approach/Withdrawal: how easily one reacts to a new situation or experience
- Adaptability: how easily one can adapt to changes in the environment
- Sensitivity threshold: how sensitive one is to potentially irritating stimuli
- Intensity of Reaction: the amount of energy one uses to express feelings
- Quality of Mood: the amount of "cheerful, friendly" or "cranky, unfriendly" behavior
- Distractibility: how easily one can be distracted from an activity
- Persistence: the length of time one will stay at a difficult task

Knowing an infant's or toddler's temperament can help an adult understand child's behavior and adjust interactions accordingly. When one is accepted as one is, one is more likely to build stronger relationships and be more open to learning and experimentation. Recognizing that these temperament traits may be with us from birth, adults will be better able to respond to them in appropriate ways and maximize early learning.

## **2. Environmental Circumstances:**

Anything and everyone surrounding the infant or toddler contributes to his or her life experiences. Varied circumstances add to the uniqueness of the infant's or toddler's personality. These include such circumstances as family composition, living situations, and how many different people and places the child experiences in a day. As with temperament, life experiences affect how individual infants and toddler build relationships and approach learning. Each child's unique life circumstance can be discovered by talking with family members and others involved in the child's life. Truly understanding each child's circumstances may take time, and can only be accomplished as a trusting relationship is built. Ultimately, this information makes it possible for caregivers to establish an environment that supports the child in meaningful ways.

**Play:** Infants and toddlers develop new skills through active exploration using open-ended, hands-on materials. Play is so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child (General Assembly Resolution 44/25 of November 1989). Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation, as well as promoting language, cognition, and social competence. Children of all ages love to play, and it gives them opportunities to explore the world, interact with others, express and control emotions, develop their symbolic and problem-solving abilities, and practice emerging skills. Research shows the links between play and foundational capacities such as memory, self-

regulation, oral language abilities, social skills, and success in school (NAEYC, 2008). Play offers individualized learning opportunities--meaningful experiences that engage infant's and toddler's interests, abilities and culture through self-discovery and challenging, but attainable, tasks.

**Policy:** Collaboration of policy makers, community leaders, professionals, and families is necessary to meet the needs of infants and toddlers. For infants and toddlers to grow and develop to their fullest potential they need safe, nurturing, and healthy environments. Policy makers must build an infrastructure at the community, state, and federal level which includes a professional development system; access to affordable health care and nutritional services; high quality care and education programs accessible to everyone; and services linked to health, mental health, and social services. Decision makers have the responsibility to keep in mind the effects that their actions have on our youngest citizens (Children's Defense Fund, 2002).

**Professionalism:** Working with infants and toddlers requires a commitment to the field of early childhood education. Professionals gain knowledge of developmental theories and practices, promote quality in the services they provide, and take advantage of opportunities for growth and competence through continuing education and self-reflection. The resulting care and education they provide balances the evidence of the effectiveness of any given practice with accumulated wisdom and experience, standards and recommended practices, and current research in the field. The paramount responsibility of

the caregiver is to provide a safe, healthy, nurturing, responsive setting for the child and, above all, cause no harm to children (NAEYC, revised 2005). Ethically driven and evidence-based practice changes the way a person's knowledge of early childhood practice is created, interpreted, shared, and applied (Zero To Three, 2006). Caregivers must use a decision-making process that integrates the best available research evidence about teaching and learning with family and professional values and wisdom.

**Quality in Programs:** The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines quality as "degree of excellence." Programs that serve infants and toddlers should continually be working to improve by showing a willingness to change and grow. This is critical to the children, families, and communities that rely on their services (NAEYC, 2006). Research shows that quality early care and education contributes to a child's readiness to learn, and that staff education and experience are determining factors in high quality programs (Pathways Mapping Initiative, 2002). The responsibility for program readiness rests with the program, not with the child (NAEYC, 1995.) Children should expect that early childhood programs will be prepared to meet their needs. Research on infant and toddler care has shown that small group size and appropriate adult to child ratios are also key components of quality care. The younger the child, the smaller the group size needs to be (PITC, 2007). A caregiver should have a solid knowledge of child development, and continue to improve his or her practices through continuing education in the field.

**Relationships** (families and caregivers): All children, birth to three years, have the right to be cared for by adults who understand the importance of nurturing relationships. "A secure attachment to a caregiver is where a young child recognizes a caregiver as a 'secure base' from whom exploration is possible, and who can be returned to if exploration leads to stress that the child cannot handle alone. This is not simply an emotional bonding, which emphasizes closeness, but is broader in scope and recognizes the need for children to develop their autonomy" (Oates, 2007). Relationship-based care should drive all other care-giving practices.

**1. Family Relationships:** When an infant or toddler is cared for outside the home, the child's home, community, and family life must be valued and respected. Responsive family partnerships grow from interpersonal relationships that reflect a mutual respect and appreciation for individual cultures, values, and language. Family partnerships are key in every child's care and education. Responsive caregivers honor the values and practices within the families being served, as well as among the people providing the services (DEC, 2002). A child's home language must be respected as the basis for learning a second language. That fact is recognized by the National Education Goals Panel, based on research that a child's learning is complex, and is influenced by cultural and contextual factors (NAEYC, 1995). The results of the relationship between families, children and other adults last a lifetime. Effective family communication and involvement consistently lead to positive effects for the early development of young children (NAEYC and NAES/SDE, 2002).

**2. Caregiver Relationships:** As previously noted, the process of developing emotional security and basic mental processes within the context of nurturing relationships and environments lays the foundation for all future learning (NITCCI and NCCIC, 2005). The process of forming a strong positive identity should occur in a setting that offers security, protection, and intimacy (Zero to Three, 2007). Children thrive in the care of familiar caregivers who play a significant role in their lives over time, caregivers that the child can count on for relative consistency of style, feelings of security, belonging, and love (WestEd, PITC, 2007.) Children's caregivers need to be nurturing and clearly understand the importance--and practice--of respectful, responsive, and reciprocal care for the age group they are working with.

**Routines:** Many learning activities for infants and toddlers take place during and around routine care: feeding, bathing, diapering, sleeping, and dressing. Healthy growth and development occurs through "deep, meaningful, and satisfying" relationships and through verbal and nonverbal communication during these typical routines. A loving and responsive caregiver uses every opportunity to help the child grow and thrive (Zero to Three, 2007). Following children's unique rhythms and styles promotes well-being and a healthy sense of self (PITC, 2007). Routines and activities should be performed with respect to the child's pace and viewed as opportunities to meaningfully connect and build positive rapport.

**School Readiness:** All infants and toddlers should be recognized as capable, competent learners and supported as such. Children are born ready to learn. The experiences that children have in the early years are the foundation for growth and development, and what they learn through these experiences are shaped by a child's family, community and school.

**Social and Emotional Development:** Healthy social and emotional development supports an infant's or toddler's developing capacity to experience, manage and express the full range of positive and negative emotions; develop close, satisfying relationships with other children and adults; and actively explore their environment and learn (Zero to Three, 2005). It is the desire to connect with others that motivates the child to learn. Developing emotional security and basic mental processes within the context of positive relationships and nurturing environments lays the foundation for all future learning (NCCIC, 2005). Social and behavioral competence in young children predicts their academic performance in the first grade, over and above their cognitive skills and family background (Center for Evidence-Based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behaviors, 2003). Children thrive in the care of familiar adults who play a significant role in their lives over time, adults that the child can count on for relative consistency of style, feelings of security, belonging, and love (WestEd,/PITC, 2007).



*"A new baby is like the beginning of all things-  
wonder, hope, a dream of possibilities."  
~ Eda J. LeShan*





## LEARNING THE SIGNS EARLY: DEVELOPMENTAL HEALTH WATCH

Check with your child's doctor or nurse if your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay:

- Does not seem to respond to loud noises from birth
- Does not notice hands by 2 months
- Does not follow moving objects with eyes by 2 to 3 months
- Does not grasp and hold objects by 3 months
- Does not smile at people by 3 months
- Cannot support head well by 3 months
- Does not reach for and grasp toys by 3 to 4 months
- Does not babble by 3 to 4 months
- Does not bring objects to mouth by 4 months
- Begins babbling, but does not try to imitate any of your sounds by 4 months
- Does not push down with legs when feet are placed on a firm surface by 4 months
- Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
- Crosses eyes most of the time (occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months)
- Does not pay attention to new faces, or seems very frightened by new faces or surroundings
- Seems very stiff, with tight muscles or seems very floppy, like a rag doll
- Head still flops back when body is pulled to a sitting position by 7 months
- Reaches with one hand only by 7 months
- Refuses to cuddle
- Shows no affection for the person who cares for him or her
- Doesn't seem to enjoy being around people
- One or both eyes consistently turn in or out
- Persistent tearing, eye drainage, or sensitivity to light
- Does not respond to sounds around him or her
- Has difficulty getting objects to mouth by 7 months
- Does not turn head to locate sounds by 4 months
- Does not roll over in either direction (front to back or back to front) by 5 months
- Seems impossible to comfort at night after 5 months
- Does not smile on his or her own by 5 months
- Cannot sit with help by 6 months
- Does not laugh or make squealing sounds by 6 months
- Does not actively reach for objects by 6 to 7 months
- Does not follow objects with both eyes at near (1 foot) and far (6 feet) ranges by 7 months
- Does not bear weight on legs by 7 months
- Does not try to attract attention through actions by 7 months
- Does not babble by 8 months
- Shows no interest in games of Peek-a-Boo by 8 months
- Does not crawl by 12 months
- Drags one side of body while crawling (for over one month)
- Cannot stand when supported by 12 months
- Does not search for objects that are hidden while he or she watches by 12 months
- Says no single words ("mama" or "dada") by 12 months
- Does not learn to use gestures, such as waving or shaking head by 12 months
- Does not point to objects or pictures by 12 months
- Cannot walk by 18 months



- Fails to develop a mature heel-toe walking pattern after several months of walking, or walks only on his toes by 24 months
- Does not speak at least 15 words by 24 months
- Does not use two-word sentences by 24 months
- By 15 months, does not seem to know the function of common household objects (brush, telephone, bell, fork, spoon)
- Does not imitate actions or words by 24 months
- Does not follow simple instructions by 24 months
- Cannot push a wheeled toy by 24 months
- Frequent falling and difficulty with stairs by 36 months
- Persistent drooling or very unclear speech by 36 months
- Cannot build a tower of more than four blocks by 36 months
- Difficulty manipulating small objects by 36 months
- Cannot copy a circle by 36 months
- Cannot communicate in short phrases by 36 months
- No involvement in "pretend" play by 36 months
- Does not understand simple instructions by 36 months

- Little interest in other children by 36 months
- Extreme difficulty separating from mother or primary caregiver by 36 months
- Poor eye contact by 36 months
- Limited interest in toys by 36 months
- Experiences a dramatic loss of skills he or she once had at any age

*Information from [www.cdc.gov/actearly](http://www.cdc.gov/actearly)*



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# Montana's early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers

birth - 36 months: what infants and toddlers need to know, experience and be able to do to reach their individual potential



## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Sensory Learning**  
Infants and toddlers use their senses to explore their environment through sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch.

- **Health and Physical Well-being**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate healthy behaviors that contribute to life-long well-being.

- **Large Muscle (Gross Motor)**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate large muscle strength, coordination, and skills to move and interact with the environment.

- **Small Muscle (Fine Motor)**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate small muscle strength, coordination, and skills for intricate exploration and interaction with objects in the environment.



## EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Attachment Relationships**  
Infants and toddlers show trust, a sense of security, and an emotional bond in relationships with familiar adults who consistently meet their needs.

- **Temperament**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate unique personality traits which are identifiable and consistent across time.

- **Sense of Self**

Infants and toddlers show an awareness and appreciation of self as a unique and capable individual.

- **Self Regulation**

Infants and toddlers manage internal states, feelings, and behavior, and develop the ability to adapt to diverse situations and environments.

- **Expression of Emotion**

Infants and toddlers express a range of feelings through facial expressions, gestures, and sounds.



## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- **Attachment Relationships**  
Infants and toddlers show trust, a sense of security, and an emotional bond in relationships with familiar adults who consistently meet their needs.

- **Adult Interaction**

Infants and toddlers interact comfortably with familiar adults and seek assistance when needed.

- **Peer Interaction**

Infants and toddlers show interest in other children and begin to interact with peers.

- **Feelings of Others**

Infants and toddlers respond to others' feelings and recognize the effects of their own behavior on others.

- **Social Identity**

Infants and toddlers recognize similarities and differences between self and others.



## COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- **Social Communication**  
Infants and toddlers are active participants in their social world and communicate with others in appropriate ways for themselves, their families, and their communities as a tool for interaction.

- **Listening & Understanding (Receptive Language)**

Infants and toddlers use listening and observation skills to learn language and other forms of communication.

- **Speaking and Communicating (Expressive Language)**

Infants and toddlers use sounds, facial expressions, gestures, and eventually signs or words to communicate wants, needs, and feelings.

- **Early Literacy and Emerging Reading**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate interest and show enjoyment of pictures and the sounds and rhythms of language in books, stories and songs, and begin to understand the meaning of basic symbols.

- **Early Literacy and Emerging Writing**

Infants and toddlers demonstrate interest in symbols as a form of meaningful communication and develop the small muscle abilities required to hold a writing tool and make marks.



## THINKING SKILLS & COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- **Approach to Learning**  
Infants and toddlers demonstrate curiosity and develop an understanding of basic concepts and relationships through playful, purposeful exploration and discovery.

- **Application of knowledge**

Infants and toddlers apply emerging knowledge and understanding of prior experiences to new situations.

- **Problem Solving**

Infants and toddlers develop strategies for solving problems through focus, persistence, reasoning, and creativity.



Montana Early Childhood Project





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